SWEET ROCKET

MARY JOHNSTON

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Books by

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SWEET ROCKET
MICHAEL FORTH
FOES
SIR MORTIMER

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SWEET ROCKET

by

MARY JOHNSTON

AUTHOR OF
"SIR MORTIMER" "MICHAEL FORTH"
"TO HAVE AND TO HOLD" "FOES" ETC.

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SWEET ROCKET

I

THE woman driving turned the phaeton from the highway into a narrow road. Almost immediately the forest through which they had been passing for a mile or more deepened. It was now a rich woodland, little cut, seldom touched by fire. Apparently the road knew little use. Narrow and in part grass-grown, soft from yesterday's rain, dimmed by many trees, now it bent and now it ran straight, a dun streak, cut always in front by that ancient, exquisite screen of bough and leaf. The highway dropped out of sight and mind. The woman to whom this countryside was new, sitting beside the woman driving, drew a breath of pleasure. "Oh, smell it! It goes over you like balm!"

"It washes the travel stains away. Take off your hat."

The other obeyed, turning and placing it upon the back seat beside a large and a small traveling bag. She drew off her gloves, too, then, straight-

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ening herself, sighed again with happiness. "How deep it goes . . . and quiet! It's thousands of miles away!"

"Hundreds of thousands, and right at hand!"

Leaves were beginning to turn. Maples had lighted fires, hickories were making gold, dogwood and sumac dyeing with crimson. Ironweed, yet blooming, blotched the roadside with purple. Joe-pye lifted heads of ashy pink, goldenrod started forth, in places farewell-summer made a low mist of lilac. The road dipped into a dell. The gray horse, the phaeton, crossed a brown streamlet, sliding, murmuring. Mint filled the air. The road lifted and ran on again into mystery. Blackbirds flew across, a woodpecker tapped and tapped, a squirrel ran up an oak. But for all of faint, stealthy rustle, perpetual low sound and small movements without end, deep, deep, deep rest was the note. Rest and solitude.

The old, strong, gray horse was named Daniel. This was his road since he was a colt. Sometimes he might find upon it Whitefoot and Bess, the farm horses, drawing the farm wagon, but oftenest it was solitary like this—his road—Sweet Rocket road. The phaeton moving its wheels rolled it, droned it forth—"Sweet Rocket road—Sweet Rocket road."

"There are five miles of it," said Marget. Her tone added, "I love it—its solitariness, its ownness!"

"It's miraculously beautiful," answered her companion. "It aches, it is so beautiful!"

"Sweet Rocket road—Sweet Rocket road," said the wheels. "Way to Sweet Rocket—way to Sweet Rocket."

"It is straight and single-minded as an arrow. No one goes but one who wishes to travel to Sweet Rocket. It is our road in and our road out. There seems to be no other."

"'Seems'?"

"I mean that it is the only road made with spade and pick."

They traveled again in silence. The visitor sat, a small, elderly woman, with a thin, strong, intelligent face. Something about her, alike of strength and of limitation, said, "Teacher for long years." She sat with her hands in her lap, looking at that truly beautiful road and the forest walls. But at last with a sigh of appreciation she turned to talk. "Twenty years and more since we last met! But you keep young, Marget. I had no difficulty in picking you out of the station crowd."

"Nor I you, dear Miss Darcy! But then I've always kept you in mind and heart. I owe you so much!"

"Ah, Marget, not much!"

"I owe you learning. It is a good deal to take a country girl, charge scarcely anything for her and see that she gets knowledge and learns how to get more—and more—"

"You are of those who reward teaching. Don't let us talk about that which was neither load nor task and so is no debt. The 'now' interests me. You look well. Your face is a rose under clear brown."

"I am well."

"And happy?"

"Yes, happy."

"I know that you couldn't be happy unless you were helping."

"I don't know how much I help. I help some."

"You were never given to long letters. There really is much that I don't at all know about you! And such as they are, I have had very few letters of late years. It was the sheerest accident my finding out that this was your part of the country. I might have gone to the Conference and never known that you were not twenty miles away!"

"The day before I had your card I knew that something pleasant was going to happen."

"Well, tell me what you do—"

Marget Land looked over Daniel's ears, down the vista of the road. At this point hemlocks grew to either hand, cones of a green that was almost black. Between rose sycamores with pale arms and leaves like silky brown hair. At the road edge the farewell-summer made a lacework, and above it glowed the sumac torches. Blue sky roofed the autumn earth. The air

just flowed, neither hot nor cold, milk warm, happy. Summer and winter had made a bargain, struck a compromise, achieved a diagonal. Gold autumn, crimson autumn, violet autumn, dusky and tawny autumn—autumn balm—autumn drawn up into a gracious figure—Keats's autumn—a goddess!

She drew a light, sighing breath. "I told you that I was happy. . . . Isn't it strange—living? Isn't it strange and sweet the way things come about? There's magic, all right! Sweet Rocket. . . . I was born in the overseer's house at Sweet Rocket. That was ten years after the war and there wasn't much nor many for my father to oversee. I love my father. He was what the mountain folk call 'a getter-on.' He had ability and a lot of goodness and a lot of kindness. Education from books had not come his way, but he knew many things. He had worked hard and saved, and after the war, when he gave up overseeing, or it gave him up, and when he turned merchant in Alder, over there, he made money—as we looked at it in Virginia in those days. Some money, that is. He had ten thousand dollars in bank when old Major Linden died, and Mary Linden married and went away, and Sweet Rocket was sold for debt. He bought it—though he kept a steady face, he was so proud to buy it! I was nine years old when we moved out of the overseer's house into the big house—my mother, my father, my two brothers, and I. I

loved it, loved it, loved it—love it, love it, love it!"

"I remember the very way in which you used to say it, 'Sweet Rocket!'"

"We became at once land poor. And my father had an illness, and, though he seemed to recover, never did quite recover. When it came to choosing and bargaining, making and laying by, he was never again the man he had been. My mother, too, who had worked so hard when she was young—too hard—began to fail. Will, my elder brother, went West. Edgar, the younger, wanted to go, too. He did not like it here. You see . . . every one still said: 'The old overseer bought it. They were all born in the overseer's house. Now they rattle around in the Lindens' house! Bottom rail—!' It was still called 'the Linden place.' As I grew old enough to have cared for what they said I somehow escaped caring. But Edgar cared. It was hard on the boy. . . . But I loved Sweet Rocket, loved it, love it! I love the overseer's house and the big house—which isn't, of course, very big, for the place was always a simple one—simple and still and out of the way!"

She seemed to pause somewhat deeply to vision something within. Miss Darcy watched the moving walls, now standing close, now a little receding, now opening as it were into gateways through which were seen forest lawns

and aisles. They shut in again. A golden bough brushed the phaeton. She who had been speaking put out her hand and touched it. "How could one help but love it? To me it is forever so old and forever so new! I lock with it. . . . What was I saying? Well, Edgar did not like it, and my mother failed, and father had less money and less money—and still we went on . . . five years, eight years, ten years. Then in one year my father died and my mother died. . . . Will came home. He and Edgar said that we must sell Sweet Rocket. I wasn't eighteen. We knew about the mortgage, but we didn't know about some other debts. When it was sold there was hardly anything to divide among us—"

"The Lindens didn't buy it back, then?"

"No, not then. Northern people bought it. Will went back to Wyoming, and Edgar with him. I went to my mother's sister—Aunt Hester—who lived in Richmond. I went to her with my two hundred and fifty dollars a year. She's one of the best of women. I never had anything but kindness from her—and one of the greatest was when she spoke of me to you!"

She put her hand over Miss Darcy's hand. "I had been to school a little, of course. There were some books at home, and I had borrowed where I could. But in Richmond, to you, I really began to go to school."

"You studied as very few study, Marget.

You studied as though waves of things were coming happily back into memory."

"Yes. But you released something. Always fire is lit from fire. Always one comes to any that sit in darkness. . . . Well, I went to school for three years. Then off you go from that school to Canada, to England, to I don't know where! I stayed in Richmond and went to a business school. I learned typewriting and stenography. I began to earn my living."

"You were with Baker and Owen?"

"Yes. And then I passed into library work. I went to Washington. I was in the library there for five years. I saved. I wrote a few papers that were published. I took what they brought me and what I had saved, and I left the library and I went around the world, second class and third class—and at times fourth—and I learned and enjoyed. I taught English here and there, and so I paid as I went. I came back in four years—back to Richmond and Aunt Hester, until I might look about me and see what I could do, for I must earn."

"If you had written to me then in New York—"

"I felt that. But there is something—don't you know there is something?—that guides us. . . . I lay one night thinking of Sweet Rocket. I could always come back here, just as really—come back from the ends of the earth! I came back often. There has always been, along the

garden wall, sweet rocket—dame's violet, you know. Some of it is white and some is purple—shining clusters growing above your waist. I could gather them in my arms and feel them against my cheek. I could get *into* the dark cedars that come up from the river. I lay in Richmond, more than half feeling, more than half seeing. . . . There's a country, you know, out of which things come down to you. . . . It came down—knowledge! I meant to go back to Sweet Rocket."

She paused. "Look at that tree—"

"It is so splendid! A sugar maple, isn't it? And that one?"

"Mountain linden. It puts on a clear, pale gold, like the old saints' haloes."

"I hear water."

"It is the little stream that we cross. See how sweet and clear and sounding it goes! Hemlock Run. All right, Daniel!"

Daniel bent mouth to water and drank.

"No check rein?"

"No."

Gray horse and old phaeton moved again. The wood grew richer and deeper. "We are nearing the river."

"And then, in Richmond, you heard about Sweet Rocket?"

"Aunt Hester had a letter from Alder. Richard Linden, old Major Linden's nephew, had bought Sweet Rocket. I was glad that some one

who must love it was there. Aunt Hester said that he had visited it once or twice as a young boy. He would remember it then as I remembered it. The second letter said that he was almost blind, and alone on the place save for the colored people. Then I saw his advertisement in the Richmond papers. He wanted a secretary, one who could read aloud well. So I answered, and was taken—five years ago."

"How old a man is he?"

"He is forty-seven and I am forty-four."

"You have inner youth—higher youth."

"Yes. Childhood there. So has he."

"Do you love him, Marget?"

"Love him? Yes! But not the once-time way, if that is what you mean. As he loves me, but not the once-time way. So we shall not marry, in the once-time way. But we live here together all the same."

"Well, if it is as fair as this road—"

"It is just a simple house in the bent arm of a little river and with hills all around, and behind the hills, mountains. There are fields and an orchard and garden. It is hidden like a lost place, and happy like a place for evermore finding itself."

"Tell me about Mr. Linden."

"No, let us wait for that. Or I can tell outward things—how we live?"

"Yes."

"He has only a small, fixed income. It

wouldn't at all go round the year, so we farm. We have an excellent man, Roger Carter, who lives in the overseer's house. Wheat, corn, buckwheat, hay, and apples! So we live and can buy—though with an elegant spareness—books and red-seal Victor records and more and more flowers for the flower garden."

"Of course you have help about the house?"

"There are two colored men and a boy, and Mimy the cook and Zinia the housemaid. But with the home garden and cornfield and orchard and the two cows and the chickens and ducks and Daniel and Whitefoot and Bess there is more than enough to do. You will be surprised to see how much he does himself."

"How can he see?"

"He can tell light from darkness, and the dim mass of things. And then, when you are blind, you grow so skillful with the other senses! And of course in a measure all of us are eyes to him. He has a great, strong body. He hoes and digs. He knows always what is beneath his fingers. He can weed a garden as well as I can. He gathers fruit and berries and vegetables and knows the perfect from the imperfect. He does no end of things. Perhaps he may work with his hands four hours a day."

"And then?"

"There are letters. I write them, and I keep his accounts, and, of course, the house. Then we read. It is a sandwiched business, but we

must average three hours a day with books. He gets up very early and walks before breakfast, and usually again in the afternoon. Sometimes I drive him on this road. Sometimes I walk with him, sometimes he goes alone. After supper we read, or listen to the Victor singing and playing, or we talk, or sit by the fire, still and thinking. Or on the porch steps when weather is warm, where I can see and he can image the stars."

"I see a good life."

"We are not without neighbors, though it seems so lonely. And then folk come to us. His blindness was an accident, you know. He has had life in the world as I have had life in the world. We *have* life in the world."

"He is one, then, that may be loved?"

"He is a great poet, though he would never call himself so. He just feels and acts so. . . . I think his face is beautiful."

"I think that your face is beautiful," thought Miss Darcy.

The tawny road turned a little east. Trees yet green, trees that wore the one color the year round, blended with golden trees and scarlet trees. Wild grapes with twisted and shaggy stems and yellowing leaves, with blue grapes hanging over, ran and mounted, held by the forest arms up to the sun. Sumac that was somehow like the Indian, that seemed to hold memories of the Indian in the land, grew in each

minute clearing. There arose a little, rustling wind, the ineffable blue air moving lightly. Brown butterflies abounded. The sense grew strong of remoteness, of calm that was not indolence, of beauty gathered and at home.

Miss Darcy moved a little. Marget Land turned toward her. "You feel it, don't you?"

"Yes."

"They that come feel it. They are drawn. There are centers of integration. This is one. I do not know who started it. Probably many, working in at different times. But now it is in action."

"Is that mysticism?"

"No. It is fact."

The forest stopped with clean decision. The road ran through fields where the corn had been cut and shocked. The shocks stood in rows like brown wigwams. Daniel and the phaeton came down to a little river, very clear, falling and murmuring over stones above and below a ford, but at the ford a mirror, reflecting autumn hills and heaven. Across the ford stretched a little pebbly beach, crowned with trees and grass, and behind the trees stood a brick house, old-red, not so large as large houses go, but of excellent line. It had a porch with Doric pillars, weather-softened. It stood among fine trees in a small valley shut in on all sides by hills and mountains, all forested to the top. Only the road and the river seemed to have way out and in,

only road and river and air and birds. Valley and colored mountain walls were proportioned, modeled, tinted to some wide and deep artist's taste. The tone was rest without weakness, movement without fury, solitude that had all company.

"How could you help but love it!" said the visiting woman.

"I don't try to help it. . . . If it burned down —if the hills sank and the wood was destroyed— still it would endure, and still I could come here. Now we cross the river. Look at the bright stones and the minnows, gliding, darting!"

Up from the river, across the pebbly shore, rose cedars dark and tall. "They are like warders. Only there's nothing, really, to ward out. All things may meet here. We go this way, to the back of the house."

"It feels enchanted."

"It is so simple. You might call it meek. There are people who pass who say, 'How lonely!'"

They were now at the back of the house, where the road skirted the flower garden. Here was the back door, with three rounded, moss-grown steps of stone. Daniel and the phaeton stood still. The two women left the vehicle. A colored man appeared. "Miss Darcy, this is Mancy. Mancy, this is Miss Darcy, come to stay with us as long as she will."

Mancy, tall and spare, with an Indian great-

grandmother, said that he was glad to see her, and took her bags. In the brick kitchen in the yard, Mimy was singing:

"Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home—"

II

"I MIGHT stay a week." Anna Darcy spoke to herself, standing at the window of the room where Marget had left her. She looked down upon flowers and out to the southern wall that closed in the valley. The mountains had the tints of desert sands at sunset. They had long wave forms; they were not peaked, nor very high. They were so old, she knew—Appalachians—older than Apennine or Himalaya. They were wearing down here, disintegrating. The weather would be lowering them year by year. They were removing and building elsewhere. They had granaries full of memories, and they must have somewhere, springing like the winter wheat, as many as the blades of wheat, anticipations. Down in the garden she saw marigolds and zinnias, late blooming pansies, mignonette, snapdragon and aster and heliotrope, larkspur, mourning bride, and citronalis. A rosy light bathed garden and fields. This was the back of the house. She saw two or three cabins and a barn, stacked hay, and a rail fence worn and lichened, fostering a growth of trumpet vine and traveler's joy. She heard cow bells. A boy

with a good-natured ebony face crossed the path below, carrying two milk pails. Chickens, turkeys, and guineas walked about in the barnyard. From the kitchen, fifty feet from the house, floated a smell of coffee and of bread in the oven. All the place was clean, friendly.

She turned to the large, four-windowed room. The walls had a paper of lavender-gray, on which hung three prints. The bed was a four-poster, with a linen, ball-fringed valance. Books stood ranged above an ancient desk; a blue jug held asters. There was a large closet and —modern blessing—a bathroom, white tubbed, pleasant and light. It had been, she saw, an old dressing room between the two chambers upon this side of the hall, with a door for each. Both doors being ajar, she saw Marget's room, large like this one, furnished not unlike this one. But that, something told her, was really the spare room, and this that she was to dwell in was Marget's room. It had the feel of Marget. "It is the pleasantest, and so she has given it to me."

She bathed and changed her dress. All the time old, happy rhythms ran in her head. Dressed, she sat down by one of the western windows, in the yet warm light. She rested her head against the back of the chair, her eyes closed. She was no longer a young woman, and she had had a tiring year, and it was grateful to her to rest thus. Rest! It was the word, it

was the feeling, that was dwelling in this place. Rest, rest, deep rest without idleness.

The air was so rare and fine—mountain air. She remembered that they said that the valley itself lay high. Mountain air. But even while she thought that she had a sudden sense of sea air, fine and strong and drenched with sun.

There would be five or six rooms on this floor. All were large, and the hall between was large. The stairway was very good, the woodwork everywhere good. The ceilings were high. They used lamps and candles. The day had been warm. Fire was not needed. But wood was laid in the fireplace and the wood box beside it held chestnut and pine.

This window gave upon the west. Here were grass and the red and gold trees, and the pebbly beach and the sickle of the water, and the lion-colored fields and the wood through which they had driven, and the amethyst mountains. The sun had set, but the sky stayed aglow. The fatigue went out of the old teacher's face. "'Cast thy bread upon the waters, and after many days it shall return to thee!'" She did not consciously repeat this, but the saying overhung her.

She had slightly opened the door giving upon the hall, so that Marget, returning, might know that she was ready. Stair and hall floor were bare wood. A step sounded upon the one and then upon the other. She was sensitive to the way folk trod. "That is Mr. Linden."

He passed her door and she heard him enter his room across the hall.

Marget presently came for her. "Let us go into the garden until the bell rings." The garden lay spread in breadths of violet brocade. They walked on brick paths and smelled box and mignonette. Then Zinia rang the supper bell.

The two entered the lower hall yet drenched with the afterglow. A man, tall and big framed, turned at their step. "Miss Darcy, this is Mr. Linden." He put out his hand; the visitor laid hers in it. It was a strong hand, likable. His voice, when he spoke, was the voice for the hand. "I am glad to see you, Miss Darcy! Marget and I are glad."

There was light enough to show a strong-featured, clean-shaven face. The eyes were blue-gray. They were not disfigured. She also came to think his face a beautiful one.

They went into the dining room, where two lamps were lighted. The mahogany table had a blue bowl of larkspur. Zinia, in a blue cotton dress and white apron, waited. There were coffee, delicate rolls, a perfection of butter and of cream, a salad, coddled apples, and sugar cakes. Marget sat behind the coffee urn and cups and saucers. Richard Linden did not take the foot of the table, but sat beside her, at the right. She aided him quietly, perfectly, nor did he need as much aid as might be thought. He was so skillful; eyes must be in fingers.

Zinia, too, marked his needs, forestalled things. She called him Mr. Dick. She had for him a low, rich, confidential whisper. "The salt, Mr. Dick." "Cottage cheese, Mr. Dick." Marget called him Richard.

The three talked of the ring of this valley and of the ring without and around it, of Miss Darcy's doings and of Sweet Rocket's, and of everybody's. It seemed that papers, magazines, the news, must come here. Earth was the earth of the beginning of the third decade of the twentieth century. There was news enough.

Supper over, they went into the parlor that was opposite the dining room, and was no more parlor than library. It stretched around, a big room with old pictures, old furniture, with books. A fire flamed and sang. They sat in the firelight, Richard Linden on one side of the hearth and Marget on the other, and Miss Darcy beside the latter. Still there was talk. The visitor would have gathered where they stood on questions of the day, then suddenly saw that they stood all round and through, and that the day to them was so old and young that it included yesterday and to-morrow. That being so, their solutions were not always those currently offered.

She also found that though they talked they were not talkative. With them conversation became a rhythmic thing—tranquil pause, deep retirement, then again the word. And it startled her almost, how completely they were one.

When they had sat by the fire an hour Marget, rising, put violin music upon a victrola. Hafitz played to them a Hebrew melody; Kreisler played, and Maud Powell. The flames danced, the world heightened. Then, one after the other, came three songs, and between each, as between the violin pieces, they watched the fire, and the forest and the night wind were felt around.

"Oh, that we two were maying!"

The song ended, the fire burned, they heard the river, the forest was all around. A man's voice was lifted.

"Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come into His Presence!"

Again the wide and deep pause, and then the third song.

"And the world shall go up with a shout unto God."

Marget shut the victrola. Again they sat in that quiet. It was systole and diastole, it was in and out, and inexpressibly it rested! And that was what she wanted, rest.

Marget lighted a lamp that stood upon the table. Linden said, "Hadn't you rather not read, to-night?"

"No. We won't read long."

He turned to the visitor. "Do you mind listening?"

Miss Darcy was glad to listen. Marget began to read. Her old teacher remembered that she had read well twenty years ago. She read better now. The book was Lafcadio Hearn's *West Indies*. "We travel so," said Linden. "We take a right journeyer and journey with him."

The fire flickered, then seemed to pass into actual fire of sun. They were in Martinique, under Pelée, in Saint Pierre, in Grand Anse. Again she was startled to feel how real it was. She touched, she knew, the people of Martinique.

Later, when the book had been closed, when they had said good night, one to the other, when she lay in bed in the dark quiet, she experienced strongly what a certain number of times in her life she had been able to experience faintly. She experienced coherence that was wider than old coherences. She interlocked with this place and her hosts. She held them, they held her. At the end of the week she must go afar. "But never any more so far that I lose the tune—never any more!" She went to sleep with a strange, fair feeling of sea about her. Not that the forest, the hills and mountains, were not there, but she felt the sea likewise. "Of course it is there, but I never thought to look at it or taste it! The sea and mountains and they and me, threaded together, talking together!" She slept.

III

AS she dressed, the next morning, she heard Mimy singing, but no stir of her hosts. The sun was shining. In at window streamed life-giving air. Her mind was upon the evening before and its current of happenings. As she had gone to sleep with the sea, of which they had read, about her, so now the three songs to which they had listened returned to mind, returned almost to sense. That was one remarkable thing about this place—the great vividness and depth of perception. . . . She knew the difference between usual or even intent thinking and intuition. Her intuitions had not been vigorous—she had looked at them with a kind of gray wonder, as at pale children from afar. They came at long intervals, but were never forgotten. It now seemed that this was a good clime for them.

She stood still in the middle of her room. Her mind opened. "'Oh, that we two were maying!' That is man and woman love, time out of mind; love and cry of love! It is Romeo and Juliet, it is Tristan and Isolde. 'Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might

come into His presence!' That is religious love that goes up from man and woman love. That is the onward going, the seeking of Great Lovers. 'And the world shall go up with a shout unto God.' That is when we move and feel and think, not as men and women, but as Humanity. The Great Mating."

The little firmament closed like eyelids and hid the greater. She was a small, gray woman, and she had beaten about in the intellect, and when gleams came like this she had taken them and promptly, when the sky closed, had doubted if they had ever existed. But to-day she was less inclined to doubt. There remained a faint luminousness in mind, a sense of depth behind feeling. She thought, "If I could stay in that garden I should indeed know bloom and music!" She moved about the room. "The point is that there *is* such a garden."

She finished dressing, and went downstairs. Zinia met her in the hall. "Good mahning! I hope you slept well? Miss Marget says you're to have breakfast on the porch. It's so warm and beautiful this mahning."

"She has had hers?"

"Yes'm. She said tell you Sweet Rocket was home. I put the table here. But if it's too sunny I can move it."

"It's not too sunny. I like sun," said Miss Darcy.

"I like it, too," said Zinia, and departed

kitchenward. Anna Darcy sat and slowly ate Catawba grapes. The porch was wide, the table placed between high, mellowed pillars. Beyond them the autumn turf ran to great trees colored like Venetian glass. The river crescent sparkled in light. Beyond it she saw the fields and the woods through which they had driven. All was closed by the mountain wall, very soft and gracious in the sun, in the still, warm air.

Zinia brought coffee and rolls. There was honey upon the table, and an old blue basket-dish filled with red-amber grapes. Zinia was very dark, supple, and strong. She had large, kind, African eyes, and beautiful teeth, and she moved with an ample and conscious majesty. Miss Darcy loved to watch her.

The evening before, a collie lay upon the steps. Miss Darcy asked of him.

"Tam? . He's gone with Mr. Dick."

Zinia stood by a pillar, watching with kind eyes the visitor's evident enjoyment of her breakfast. Miss Darcy had noted before, and noted now, the lack of any servility at Sweet Rocket. They all seemed too much a part of one another for that. But there was also that fine courtesy and feeling that did not speak out of the way when speech was not wanted. They all seemed to sail upon some inner current of understanding.

She finished breakfast, and, rising, helped Zinia to carry away the table. Dining room

and pantry shone clean and simple. Zinia had flowers in the pantry, and upon the shelf below the china press an open book. Miss Darcy glanced. "What are you reading?—*Pilgrim's Progress?*"

"Yes'm," said Zinia, in her rich voice. "I like that girl Mercy."

The house was clean and sunny; still, and yet singing somehow, like a great shell held to ear. She walked about, and at last went out into the high morning and the flower garden. The brick paths glistened. Box smelled sweet, mignonette and citronalis. Around flowed bird life and a vast insect life. Multitudinous song and hum and chirr fell into harmony. She walked up and down the paths and partook of garden amusements, then went out by a wicket gate and found herself near the outdoor kitchen. A brown four-year-old was seated on the stone step. She stopped before him. "Good morning!"

"Mahning."

"What is your name?"

"Just So."

"Just So?"

"Yass'm."

Mimy appeared in the doorway. Mimy was a small woman with a face like a carved cherry stone for wrinkles. "He's my grandson, ma'am, Just So."

"I heard you singing," said Miss Darcy. "I loved it."

"Singing's like butter on the griddle," said Mimy. "It helps you turn things!" She sighed portentously, and then she groaned. "I've had a lot of things to turn! Yes'm, I've lived long and turned a lot of things!"

Her voice was gloom, and yet carried more than a suspicion of rich chuckle. She enjoyed her old woes, disaster had grown so shallow. "I, too," thought the visitor, "have had a lot of things to turn! I, too, have come to where I can stand back and see the drama and feel the play thrill!"

Just So was a solemn young one. He sat and gazed as though in contemplation of the many things he would have to turn. Then a brown hen came by, and he put out a brown toe and dug in the earth, and said, "Shoo!" and laughed. Miss Darcy left him playing with a string of spools and a broken coffee mill. Mimy in the kitchen was toasting coffee and singing. The coffee smelled better than good, the singing was without age in the voice.

"Who built the Ark?
Oh, Noah built the Ark!
It rained forty days,
And it rained forty nights!
'There ain't any sun and there ain't any heights!'
Oh, Noah built the Ark!"

Miss Darcy's path led on to the barn. Cocks and hens, white and red, held the barnyard.

She watched them with pleasure, and the sun on the gray walls and the barn swallows going in and out. Then she found Mancy sitting under a shed, mending a wagon shaft.

"Good morning!"

"Good morning!"

"It's a lovely day."

"It is so, ma'am! You're from the city, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"I hope you like Sweet Rocket?"

"I do. It makes you feel whole."

Mancy glanced at her. He was a long, brown man, with features between negro and Indian. What you liked very much was his smile. It dropped over his face slowly, like sun on brown hills, out of quiet, cloudy weather. "That's a true saying!" he offered. "That's what I think about heaven. We'll just feel and know that we're well and whole."

The school-teacher's mind said: "The negro is a religious character. He is always willing to talk of the Lord and of heaven."

"All the little torn bits coming together," finished Mancy.

He sat mending the wagon shaft. It came to her, standing watching him, to say something of the distracted and warring earth. His slow smile stole again over his face. "Yes'm. We hurt ourselves right often."

"You call it that—hurting oneself?"

"Yes'm. What do you call it?"

"I don't know. . . . I suppose it *is* hurting one's self—suicidal mania!" she thought. "Perhaps all the history I have ever taught has been the story of self hurt and self heal—perhaps we fight our self in Europe and Asia and America. Perhaps, in the tissue wide as space, centers here and centers there are beginning to learn self heal above self hurt—"

She stood looking at the mountains while Mancy worked on at the wagon shaft. Presently she said, "You would say that this was a very lonely place, but I have touched a thousand things since I came that run out and touch everywhere!"

"Mountains aren't walls," said Mancy.

She left the barn and walked on to the orchard. The apples had been gathered, but a few red orbs yet hung from the branches. She walked beneath the trees and she thought of old, dull troubles and anxieties that had attended her life. This morning light seemed at work among them, disintegrating them.

The sun came down between the trees. The air blew soft and fine. She returned to the house, and upon the porch steps found Mrs. Cliff with baskets to sell, woven of white-oak splits, in a mountain cabin, by her son and herself. She was waiting for Marget and seemed content to wait as long as the sun shone. She wore a faded calico and a brown sunbonnet, and she dipped snuff.

"Good morning!"

"Mornin'!"

Mrs. Cliff put her snuffbox in her pocket. "Don't you want to buy a basket? These three are fer Miss Marget."

Miss Darcy examined and admired. "I'd like this little one." Mrs. Cliff put it aside. "I hain't seen you here before."

"I've just come. You've got a lovely country."

"Yaas. We think so. Do you see yon clearing on mountain? I come from thar." Miss Darcy sat down, and she and the mountain woman talked of basket weaving and of the times, which Mrs. Cliff said were hard. "What do you think sugar is? An' what you got to give fer a pair of shoes? You've got to sit an' fergit, even while you're rememberin', or you don't git nowhar! I wish Jesus Christ would come on back!"

"He is somewhat needed," Anna Darcy agreed.

"I had a funny thing happen to me yesterday," said Mrs. Cliff. "I had jest finished that basket. I was setting on the step an' awful tired, an' I shet my eyes an' leaned my head back against the door. An jest like that I thought, 'He's in little bits in all of us, an' we've got to put him together.' An' jest thinking it, all in a minute I felt so big and rested! But it couldn't last. I wish it would come again."

Marget's voice was heard, speaking to Zinia. "She's come back. They're mighty kind folk here!"

"I know that."

"They *like* doin' you a good turn," said Mrs. Cliff, and, getting to her feet, gathered up her baskets.

IV

IN the afternoon the three and Tam went for a walk. They crossed the river by a foot-bridge and walked a mile by waterside. This brought them to valley end. The stream slipped on between close-standing hills, but the strollers turned aside into a glade from which the greater forest had been cut. Young trees and tall old trees were set with some spareness. All wore robes like princes; all glowed in a dream of spring behind winter. The ground had gray moss and green moss, and all manner of minute and charming growths. The sun so came into this glade that the wild grape found and took advantage. It leaned its wine-hued, shaggy stem against trunks; it climbed and overran, and made bridges from tree to tree. Its festoons shone aloft, its broad leaves and blue clusters dreamed against autumn sky. The air breathed dry and fine. Sunshine lay on ground in shafts and plaques of gold.

Richard Linden used a staff. Marget kept near him and Tam just ahead. Walking so, you would not think he was a blind man. Indeed, he seemed to have a sixth sense, he moved

so easily. The three walked without much speech. The day was the sumptuous speaker; these woods, this feather air, the admirable poise of the year before its journey from hearth fire, the plain chant of the crickets, the trill of the bird.

In a roll over his shoulder Linden carried a wide and thick plaid. Presently Marget said: "Let us rest before we turn back. Miss Darcy isn't the tramp that we are!" whereupon they pitched camp for half an hour, spreading the plaid beneath a tree. Richard Linden, resting against a chance bowlder, locked his hands behind his head and lifted his face to the high, free sky. Marget took off her wide hat and lay down beside Miss Darcy, who sat on a stone. Tam had the dry grass and moss and the fringe of the plaid.

Marget spoke. "We are under a young hickory, Richard. It is all gold. There is a dogwood close by, and its leaves are red, and it is very full of berries. Wild grape has started by the dogwood and crossed to the hickory. It is far and near and up and down. The leaves are half green and half yellow, and there are a thousand bunches of grapes."

"I see!" he said; "and I hear a woodpecker."

"It's yonder on a white oak. It's a flicker. There isn't a cloud in the sky, and far, far up, small as a dragon fly, is a buzzard sailing. There's a cedar waxwing in the dogwood strip-

ping berries. There is another—a third! We frightened them away, but they are coming back. They're after the grapes. There will be fifty in a moment—"

They kept still and watched, Marget's hand on Tam. Slender, graceful, tawny, crested birds came in a flock. They entered the hickory and the dogwood. With quick movements of head and body they stripped the grapes and the scarlet dogwood berries. They perched and removed, and perched again. They kept up a low talk among themselves and a perpetual flutter of wings. It was as though a wind were in the trees, so continuous was the sound. Blue grapes, dogwood berries, dropped upon the ground. For ten minutes the flock fluttered and fed, while with intent, pleased faces the human beings watched or listened. Then Tam became aware of a rabbit down the glade and started up. Away flew the cedar waxwings.

"Oh, wasn't it lovely?"

They sat still. Richard Linden, resting against the rock, kept his face raised to blue sky. "Their life!" he said. "As we enter upon their life—"

Tam came back, the rabbit having vanished. "Lie still, Tam, lie still! Get into your life-to-be for a little, and be quiet shepherd on a hill instead of shepherd's dog!"

"Their life—"

The visitor to Sweet Rocket sat still, with her

eyes upon the gold fretwork of the hickory. She was thinking of the birds. It was very sunny, very still in the glade. Her companions also rested silent. They seemed to be in reverie, to be going where they would in their inner worlds.

Miss Darcy followed the waxwings in their flight. She saw the flock that had been here, and other flocks, stripping wild grape and dogwood and cedar berries. They were far and near, in many a woodland glade. In thousands they twined and turned, they talked in the clan, their wings made a windy sound. And the woodpeckers! Hammer and hammer, through the forests of the world! And the thrush that she had heard this morning, and the humming bird in the garden—and the crows that had cawed from a hillside, the hawk and the owl. . . . Suddenly she saw in some space an eagle rise to its nest upon a crag edge. From the one she saw others. Eagles in all the lands. For one instant she caught a far glimpse of the Idea, the absolute eagle. There was the rush of a loftier sense. Then she sank from that, but she saw eagles in all the lands. She saw the great hawks and the condors. Green waves were beneath her; with sea birds she skimmed them in the first light, and the cries of her kind were about her. On the ice floes walked the penguins, the albatross winnowed solitude. With heron and flamingo and crane she knew shore and marsh. The white swan and the black swan oared their way

through still waters. In their right circle moved the peacock and the pheasant, the lyre bird, the bower bird, and the bird of paradise. The nightingale sang in deep woods, and in southern thickets of yellow jessamine sang the mocking bird. The lark mounted into the air, the cuckoo called from the hedge, the wren built under the eaves. In the gray dawn, from a thousand farms and hamlets, crowed the cocks. Over all the earth clucked the hen, peeped the downy chick. The swallows crossed a saffron sky and the whip-poorwill cried in the night, and in the morning the quails said "Bob White!" Migrating hordes, like scuds of clouds, drove before favorable winds, north, south! She was plunged in the life of birds, where they waded between deep water and solid shore, where they lived in a world of green, where they flew aloft and afar, over land, over sea—all their plumage, shapes, and magnitudes. She seemed to hear their cheepings, cries and songs, to hear them and touch them, their sleekness, lightness, threaded beauty! Over all the earth spread the passionate wooing, the daylong song. Here were the nests, the multitudes, and the eggs, green and blue and white and dark. The nests and eggs became transfigured. The straw of the nests burned lines of white fire, the cup was diamond light, the shell of the egg no more than a window, and through it was seen the bird-past, and the bird desire and will and power. Out of the egg

the young—she heard the nightingales in the woods, the lark in the sky!

"See the love and beauty and power and daring! See the thought and feeling pressing on—see them trooping into fuller being—see them men and women, their tribes and nations! When we have gone far, far on, see their human earth!"

It was Linden, she thought, who said that. She came back with a great throb of her heart to the earth beneath a golden hickory, to the October sun, in a little Virginian valley. Yet the two reclining there seemed still in a brown study, gone away. She thought: "I am come into a strange country! Are they knowing, feeling all that life more intensely than I, for all that they lie there so quietly, thinking, one would say, of to-morrow's work, of a book they are reading, or of the cedar waxwings? . . . It is all in the range of perception, could I run like light all over the earth! There are those birds and their life. I only saw what *is!*"

But she felt that while she had had a wave of it those two had a whole breadth of ocean. She felt that they were expert, adept. She felt again the breath of wonder. It was at once wonder and homelikeness. "Glad—glad—glad that I came! My gray road turns!"

Richard Linden dropped his hands from behind his head and passed them over his eyes. Marget rose to her knees. There was deep light in her face. She lifted then let fall her arms.

"Oh, the *beauty* when life is seen as a landscape, heard as a symphony, smelled as a garden, tasted as nectar, dwelt in as a house!" She rose to her feet. "The sun is gone from the grass. It is dawn in Tibet. Come, Tam, let us be going home!"

They folded the plaid and left the hickory and the dogwood. The glade was turning violet, but the hilltops showed golden and the mountains stood in light. A rich scent breathed from the earth, while the air carried a spear from the north. Leaving the wood, they took again the path by the river, that sang toward them, that held pools of light.

Walking so, Marget fell to talking of Anna Darcy's life, the manner of it, her steadfast work from year to year, and all her kindnesses, and all that she had given. At first Miss Darcy tried to stop her, but then she could not try any longer, the appreciation was so sweet. Her life had been difficult, isolated for all the stir around her, subject to sorrows, a little withered and gray. She felt the exquisite caress of their interest. It was more than that to her; it was recognition.

How would it be if all were truly interested in all? If there were general recognition?

As she walked, the valley and the hills, the river and warm, dusky air, the collie, the man and woman with her, herself, seemed to shift and quiver into one. Walls vanished. There

happened rest, understanding, imperviousness to harm, blood warmth, and new and strange aspiration.

It was impossible for her to hold the moment. She seemed to herself to sink again to the rigid and small shape of Anna Darcy, like an Egyptian figure graved on stone, a plane figure. But she did not wholly fit back into the figure. She felt that above it was fullness and youth and song, and that they were hers as well as another's.

V

AGAIN, the next morning, she found neither of her hosts. "We breakfast early and work early," Marget had said. Again Zinia served her alone, again she walked in the flower garden, again she went farther afield. The day was brilliantly, vividly clear, white clouds in the sky, and between, great seas of cobalt. She went at once to the river path, but turned this morning up the stream. The day hung joyous, the high and moving clouds, the light and shadow had magnificence. She felt very well; she really looked five years younger. Before her, beyond a spur of orchard, she made out the roof of a building. When she came nearer she felt an assurance that this was the overseer's house. "Where Marget was born," she thought; "where she lived with her father and mother and brothers."

Presently she stood still to regard the place.

The house was a small one, two-storied, frame, painted white with green blinds. It had a small porch with a window to either side. At the back she made out a wider porch, and there were outbuildings. The whole was buried

among locust trees and old shrubs, that when she came nearer she recognized for lilac and althea and syringa. Door and windows stood open. At first she thought she would turn from the river to the house, but then she said, "No, not till she herself brings me here some day." But the place was plain before her where she stood. When she had moved a few paces she looked full to the door, between locust trees and bushes. She was now beside a giant sycamore, very old, all copper colored as to leaf, with dappled white and brown arms. Built around the bole was a wooden bench, old and weather-worn. "She played here when she was a child. They have all sat here beneath this tree. She comes here now, I fancy, often."

She took her seat. No one came in or out of the house door a stone's throw away. The place was sunny and deserted. There came, as it were, a veil over it. She shut her eyes the better to look at child life here with father and mother and Will and Edgar. The old overseer, who had fought in the war for the old order, but who, when it came crash! had built in the new; and the mother, Elizabeth Land, overworked and uncomplaining; and the boys with their desires and broodings and hopes—she felt them all.

Sitting with her eyes shut, she passed into feeling them very strongly. The place turned to be of thirty, forty years ago. She moved with the overseer as he went to his work and

came from it. With Marget Land's mother she was cooking, sewing, cleaning. She was with the three children, the boys older than the girl, at tasks and in play. Swim in the river, swing under the locust tree, go for berries, for persimmons, chinquapins, walnuts, for grapes and haws, go for the cow, work in the garden patch, shell the peas, shuck the corn, look for eggs, pick the currants and gooseberries, split the kindling, gather the chips, wash the dishes, clean the lamps, sit by the fire and study reading, writing, and arithmetic—she was deep in it, deep in a slow, steady current of participation. It did not seem to curve, but now it was her own childhood, her parents and brothers and sisters, an old town house and a leafy town square—life, life, so varied and so the same! Deep, deep wash of deep waves, and so pleasant, so sweet, all the pang and ill lost! A past that was winnowed, understood, forgiven, appreciated, loved by mind and heart of Farther On, and that was present, gone nowhere, here, in finer space and finer time, a vast country capable of being visited! Going into it was to find the deathless taste of eternity. It was not dark; you could fill it with golden light. The forms there were not immovable, not dead. As you understood, they lived and were yourself. As you remembered, you saw that you were remembering, that you were re-collecting from far and near, your Self.

Anna Darcy sat very still. "I had to wait till I was fifty-eight years old to see that."

As on yesterday it had grown out of a commonplace of imagination and memory. Memory and imagination had, by degrees, entered *their* deeper selves.

Again, as on yesterday, she could not hold it. Increased energy, increased perception, what the ancients called the Genius, and the mystic called illumination, or voice of God, and the moderns higher vibration, superconsciousness—whatever it was, and perhaps the name did not much matter, she had touched it and then lost it. But she knew that it had been touched, and that it was desirable to know it or its like again.

She was a member of the church, a praying woman. She bent her forehead upon her hands: "O God, let thy kingdom come! As it comes near us, send thy breezes!"

Presently, rising, she went on up the stream. It was not wide; it just came into the category of river, headwater, she knew, of a greater river. October painted it with russets and golds and reds. Midcurrent showed the ineffable blue of the sky, or when clouds drove by the zenith, the clouds. She walked on until before her she saw the eastern gate of the vale. The hills closed in, leaving a bit of grassy meadow on either side the stream. This narrowed. The hills grew loftier, insensibly became mountains. She was

in a mountain pass, gray cliff to the right, hemlocks overhanging the water that was broken now by bowlders, débris of an ancient rock. The path was cool and dark and washed by the scent of the conifers. Only here and there the climbing sun sent splashing through an intensity of light that showed every fallen needle, every cone or twig or leaf upon the path. Not far before her the path turned and went up over the mountain. She thought, "That will be the way to Mrs. Cliff's."

She came upon a fisherman. He sat among the roots of a hemlock, and was engaged in reeling in his line. He was a man neither old nor young, with a long, easy frame, and a short, graying beard. His dress was that of a fisherman who goes forth from the city to fish—but not for the first nor the second nor the third time. Nothing that he had on was new, but all was well cut.

"Good morning!" he said.

"Good morning!"

He worked on at his reel. "Each time that I do this I say that it is the last time."

"Why?"

"I grow too damned able—I beg your pardon!—to put myself in the fish's place."

"Have you caught any?"

"This morning? Not a ghost of one! Yet they say this is a good stream! I think that I warn them off the hook. 'Monsieur Black

Bass, or Signor Trout, as it may be, my desire not to take you is gaining, I feel, upon my desire to take you! Your own desire naturally aiding the first, I grow to feel that we make a strong combination!'"

He laughed, putting up his rod. Then his mustaches went down and his face became serious enough. "So much mangling! I've had my fill."

"How did you come? Over the mountain?"

"Yes. I am camping with a dozen New York and Washington fellows on another little river over there. The others fish that stream. I'm like Mrs. Elton. I adore exploring! I slept last night in a mountain cabin—Cliff's. Can you tell me how far I am from Sweet Rocket farm?"

"Less than a mile."

"No! I didn't think from what the mountain folk said that it was so near. I knew before I came that he was somewhere in these parts."

"Do you know Mr. Linden?"

"I was his classmate at the university. Then, fifteen years ago, I met him in southern Russia. We had a couple of weeks together, and then I must hurry on to Constantinople, where I was due. He went into the Caucasus. I lost sight of him. It was two years later that I heard of that accident which blinded him, and I've heard since only second- and third-hand things. The other day in the club a man told me that

he was living where his people had lived, down here in Virginia. I meant to go to see him, but I meant to write first."

"I am a visitor at Sweet Rocket. But I am sure that Mr. Linden would wish you to come on to the house. Had you not better do so?"

"Why, yes, then, I think that I shall." He stood up from the hemlock roots. "You are very good. My name is Curtin—Martin Curtin."

She gave her own. He took up fisherman's paraphernalia and a light coat. They moved out of ravine into meadow strip; before them lay the jewel valley. Mr. Curtin drew a deep breath.

"And he hasn't eyes to look at it!"

Anna Darcy found herself answering with certitude. "He sees it and a thousand places beside."

They walked on, Mr. Curtin gazing at river, hills, and mountains, and quiet valley floor. "I have known of his doing some splendid things in life—simple and splendid—the kind that steals into folk, and they do likewise!"

"Yes, I should think that."

"What is that house?"

"In old times it is the overseer's house. Now the young farmer who helps him lives there."

"'In old times it *is*'—that's an unusual phrase."

"I mean that to me, for reasons, it stays that way and *is*."

"I agree! When you turn to a thing it *is*. Turn with decision enough, and your overseer would come out to meet you. That's a sycamore for you! Do you ever feel the Indians by these streams? If you can see your overseer you can see your Indians, too."

They walked on. "Is that the house?"

"Yes."

"It's a simple place, too—but I like it. Houses, now! I make a specialty of keeping them in duration."

Anna Darcy thought, "A week ago I wouldn't have understood that."

The house where she was born, the house facing, across a row of box and a finely wrought iron paling, the old, leafy city square, walked bodily into her. She was through it, up and down, like the air. It seemed to her that there wasn't anything she didn't know about it, and it all came together into an inner aroma, taste and tone, dry, warm, pungent and likable, idiosyncratic, its very own. It had been a loss, a grief, when the city had taken and torn down that house. And all the time it was waiting for her, in a deep reality, to walk in and take possession!

She thought: "What is happening? I shall never be lonely again!"

Mr. Curtin looked from side to side of Sweet Rocket valley. "It's like a beaker of Venetian glass! You'd say there was a magic drink in it.

. . . But how clean and drenched with sun is this air!"

"Yes!"

"He never married? Archer said he thought not."

"No, he didn't marry."

"He's rather the kind that marries the world."

"Yes, I think so. We turn here to the house. Have you the time?"

"It's almost noon."

"He will be home, then. He works upon the farm as though he had eyes."

They left the pebbly beach and went by the cedars up to the house. Tam came to meet them, and Linden rose from the bench upon the porch.

VI

"AND so he was killed," said Curtin, speaking with strongly controlled emotion. "And I can tell you that when I heard it I felt physically that shock and crash and mortal bruising. It wasn't only my heart that was wounded. My nerves and my flesh felt it. Even now I think that there must be but one body— I got away for a time after he was buried. I went down to Hyères. I used to sit there by the sea. He was a lovable fellow, square as they make them. We were brothers and friends, too. Well, that is the way it runs! Life—death. Life—death! I would give a good deal—"

He had been thirty-odd hours at Sweet Rocket. They had sent up mountain to Cliff, who took down to his camp news that he would be gone for some days. They had given him the room next to Linden, and he had become at once delightfully at home.

When with Miss Darcy he had stepped upon the porch Linden had said: "Don't think you take me by surprise! I saw you in my looking-glass this morning!"

"It is good to find you again, Linden! What do you mean by your looking-glass?"

Linden laughed, his hands upon the old classmate's shoulders. "Only that I had been thinking of you. And the other night I was with you by the Sea of Azof. I thought, 'I should like to see him again!' And you know yourself that when you make a current boats appear upon it!"

Now, as the four sat about the fire in the big parlor, before the lamp was lighted, he had been telling of the death of his brother, an aviator. There had followed silence; then, "Well, let us talk of something else!" said Curtin. He took up the pipe he had laid upon the hearth beside him, and raking out a coal from the fire, relit it. "What do you think is going to happen now, Linden?"

They sat and talked, and the flames leaped, many and small, in the mahogany of the room. At ten they rose to separate for the night.

"Come look at the sky," said Linden. "The first week in October, and diamond clear!" They went out to the porch, and then, so majestic was the night, to the sweep before the house, whence they might see the great expanse. It was very still. The river sounded, but the air rested a thin and moveless veil. It was not cold. Richard Linden stood bareheaded, his face uplifted to the vault that writes forever its runes before men.

"By George! I forgot!" thought Curtin.

"But doubtless he knows them so well that he knows where they are, season by season." It seemed that it might be so. Linden spoke as though he saw. "See the Pleiades and Capella and Aldebaran! The Great Square is at its height. The Cross and the Eagle and the Lyre. The mountains hide Fomalhaut." They walked a little way upon the road. Immense and tingling was that view, looking outward, looking inward, upon those stars. At last they came indoors and said good night.

Martin Curtin lay in a big four-poster bed and stared out of window. Upon going to bed he had slept quickly and soundly. Now he was awake, and he thought it might be past four of the morning. He felt the subtle turn toward the day. He heard a dog bark and a cock crow. He was aware that he had waked suddenly and completely. He was wide awake, and more than that. There was a keenness, an awareness; keen, sharpened, but also wide. His body lying very still, he began to remember, but it was remembering with a deeper and fuller pulse than was ordinarily the case. He remembered that younger brother who was dead, and not him alone, but many another, kindred and friends and associates. The past lived again, but lived with a difference. What multitudes of kindred, and friends, and associates! The meeting went deep and wide. Had he touched all those in one life or had it been in many lives? Was the

whole texture coming alive, and in effect did it include the whole past, the whole dead and gone? However it might be, it was a world transmuted and without pain. He lay still, regarding it. It was strong and light, and he and it grew together with a sense of frictionlessness, of exquisite relief, even with a kind of golden humorousness. None had been truly any better or worse than another, nor in any way miraculously different, and now they could understand and laugh together! The sense of union was exquisite, and the sense of variousness hardly less so. The variousness was without hostility. It glided and turned smoothly, much as personal thought and mood might glide and turn. The sense of well-being flowed in every realm. The perception included environment. Remembered, recalled persons meant remembered, recalled houses, towns, country, forest and river, fields and gardens, a thousand, thousand places! Where were they all? They were all over the earth—light and golden—loved places and the right people in them! There was nothing rigid —even the places understood one another. Curtin felt a profound happiness. This one body, lying at Sweet Rocket, was not wholly forgot nor relinquished. It came into the pattern of variousness. But Curtin himself was moving in a wider consciousness. All these people, all these selves of himself! and he understood their old difficulties and he understood their old misunder-

standings. The *piece* understood, the beautiful tissue! The music understood, the notes moving so richly together! It was throbbing in the present and in the understood, the appropriated past. He never thought, "How grotesque the thought that we are dead!" The thought could not even occur.

For one flash, for less than an instant, the plane lifted. There started forth a high, a tremendous sense of unity—Presence. It towered, it overflowed him, he was of it—then the instant closed. As it had come like a towering wave, so it sank like a wave. But there was left the lasting thrill of it, and there was left undying aspiration. "Ah, to find it again! Ah, if it will come again!"

Where had been sense of the whole, again befell fragmentariness. Loss—great loss—and yet was there falling sweetness, exquisiteness still of order! He felt again the wide world that they said was dead, and yet surely was no such thing. There happened again wide and subtle change. Out of a stillness, a silence, an isolation, exquisite and tingling, a state of clarity and poise, one spoke to him *within*, "Martin!"

He answered in that space. "Yes, John. . . . No, grief is absurd! . . . Just because we're ignorant!"

"You can be content. We can be content."

"Yes, I see! We are all in one, who cannot be destroyed."

There came no more, but the world was a rhythm, swinging, swinging. There reigned great rest and calm. Out of this, with much of it yet clinging, he sank to the square, clean, sparely furnished bedroom at Sweet Rocket, with the cock crowing, with the old clock in the lower hall striking five. Curtin lay very quiet in the big bed. Dawn was coming, but his sense was that of an afterglow. He had felt beauty and still wonder like this in high mountains, watching Alpine glow. It faded and faded, but there was left with him assurance, rest, the sense of a dawn to be, a consciousness behind this consciousness, another consciousness towering, sun-gilt, in the future. He lay very still, at rest, hardly wondering. The great things, the beautiful things, were the natural things. The wholly full and blissful would be the finally natural. Dawn came in rose and amethyst.

When it was full light Curtin left his bed, dressed, and went downstairs. He thought that he would walk by the river or in the garden. The house was still, the front door open. Early though it was, he found Linden on the porch starting forth with Tam. He had found, he said, that he must see Roger Carter, who was riding to-day to Alder and would be starting presently. "Will you walk with me? But you shouldn't miss your breakfast. I've had bread and milk."

"I won't go now," answered Curtin. "I'll

walk up and down before the house for a while. Something happened to me last night, or I happened into something. I'd like to talk to you about it, Linden—but it won't fade before you come back. I don't indeed think it will ever fade."

There was that in Linden's remembered face, when Linden himself had gone away toward Roger Carter's, that made Curtin think, walking now before the house as they had walked the night before under the stars: "Does he know what I felt? Could he even have helped—put a shoulder to the wheel, seeing that I was grieved and uncertain?" Not so long ago he might have answered, "That's fantastic!" but he did not so answer now.

He went into the garden and walked up and down. Before seven Marget came out to him. "I saw you walking in the dawn like a man in a ballad. Could you not sleep?"

"I slept till nearly five."

They walked by the late asters and the stocks. Said Curtin: "I remember a line of Masefield's:

> ". . . the dim room had mind, and seemed to brood.

And again:

> "And felt the hillside thronged by souls unseen
> Who knew the interest in me and were keen
> That man alive should understand man dead.

Miss Land, do you think that is true?"

"Yes. Surely."

"Do you think we can be reassured about the dead—all the dead—and ourselves when we die?"

"Yes, I do. Very safe, very sure."

"Well, I think so this morning."

They walked by the marigolds and larkspur. "Where do you meet the dead? In this space?" He indicated it with a wide gesture.

"No. In space that permeates this space. In added space. When and where we make space. Though I think," said Marget, "that one day the edges will have so flowed together that we shall say 'in this space.'"

"You and Richard Linden both have that assurance?"

"Yes. Many have it now." She added, "I think, perhaps, that it is more easily felt in some places than in others."

He thought, "As we put telescopes on heights."

They walked by the wall with the ivy. Her quiet, dark eyes were upon him, friendly, kindly. He thought: "No less than Linden she hoped such a night for me. Perhaps—"

A bell rang. "That is for us. Miss Darcy, too, comes down early now."

They went indoors. Anna Darcy met them in the hall and they went together into the bright dining room, to their pleasant breakfast, and Zinia waiting, with "that girl Mercy" still at heart.

VII

THE next day was Sunday. Zinia and Mimy and Mancy walked early to their church, two miles down the river. Marget and Miss Darcy, Linden and Curtin, went to Alder in the phaeton, drawn by Daniel and Bess. It was as sunny and still a day as might be found in any autumn land, and most beauteous was that forest through which they drove. Anna Darcy was glad to see it again. It rested forever in her mind, a true magic approach. Marget drove, Curtin sitting beside her, Miss Darcy and Richard Linden behind them. The jewel miles went by and the pleasant, pleasant air. Here rose Alder on a green hill, and Alder had three streets, a hundred dwelling houses, and three white-spired churches. The houses were brick or frame, with shady yards and late-blooming flowers. They drove by a small, quaint courthouse, a rambling hotel, and several stores, closed to-day. The trees were maples and Lombardy poplars and a few ancient mulberries. Folk were going to church, and they spoke to Sweet Rocket and Sweet Rocket to them.

Before them rose a church of white frame, set

in an ample churchyard, all glowing maples with a mosaic of red and gold leaves underfoot. Street before it and bordering lane held horses and buggies and Fords and Buicks. The second bell had not rung. Men and boys waited around the doors, talk and laughter at a Sunday pitch. Women were entering, some with children in their hands. Sweet Rocket folk, leaving the phaeton, walking up churchyard path, took and gave greeting. They entered the church, Marget's hand upon Linden's arm, just guiding him to a pleasant pew by a pleasant, open window, the weather being yet so warm. Curtin took his seat, and, turning a little, watched the folk enter. He did not know when he had been in a village church like this, nor, indeed, had he been for long in any church at all, barring the cathedrals and churches abroad, into which he went as artist. A clear, sweet sound, overhead, rang the second bell. Men and youths came in; the building filled. A simple place, it was well proportioned and to-day filled with a dreamy, golden, softened light. In that soft, flowing atmosphere, men and women and children were gathered as in a bouquet. The choir assembled, the young woman who was the organist took her place. A woman in the pew behind Curtin leaned over and gave him an opened hymn book. The minister appeared, a kindly faced, small, elderly man. The bouquet became more and more Sunday.

Curtin glanced at Linden. He sat as always, with ease, and a certain still power. He seemed to Curtin as simple and whole as a planet in the sky. This village Methodist church seemed within his frontier, as, when you thought of it, all other places seemed within it. Curtin remembered. They were talking, he and Linden, in Odessa, in their hotel, after having been to a great service in a great church. Linden was telling him that Religion held all religions, and that he, Linden, belonged solely to no one church, but liked at times to go sit in any one of them. He had gone on to say other things, but Curtin—and Curtin remembered this with a certain pang—had yawned, and said that it had been a tiring day and that he would off to bed. "My God, I was crass in those years!" thought Curtin. He still watched Linden, who could not know that he was being watched; and at the thought Linden turned his head and smiled at him. His face said as distinctly as if his voice had uttered it, "Yes, that night at Odessa!"

Again Curtin, startled at first, felt the startling vanish. He thought—and, as on last night, his thought seemed to lay hold upon and give form to a down-draught from some upper region —"Truly the startling should be over mind broken from mind, not over mind beginning to heal!"

He sat in a deep study. There came like a

picture into his mind Jesus of Nazareth's parable of the talents. "Ability to perceive thought! If the world should take that talent and improve it, a different world we should have anon!"

"Let us pray," said the minister. When they had prayed, he said, "Let us sing hymn number—"

They sang:

"Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if thou be near—"

"I will read," said the minister, "from the twenty-fifth chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew."

Curtin heard read the parable of the talents. He thought: "Intercommunication. It widens and deepens and heightens perpetually. Now it gets to be wireless, independent of gesture or the vocal cords, or the handwriting." There thronged echoes of his experience of the other night. "Intercommunication becomes communion. Communion becomes identity. At last 'we know even as we are known.'"

The reading ended. They sang

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me."

All the congregation sang; men, women, and children's piping voices. They sat down. The minister took his text from the parable he had read.

It was a good, plain sermon, in which the preacher said more than he knew he said. The air came in at window, bees buzzed without, a brown butterfly passed. The congregation breathed gently, rhythmically. The sun gave life to the flowers upon the women's and the children's hats. There were young faces and old faces, dull faces and quick faces, intent faces and wandering faces. Some were rich flowers, and others little flowers not far from weeds, but all were in the garden. Curtin thought: "They are like the thoughts and moods of a man, many and various, but all in the man. One Man. . . . It was Balzac who said, 'There is but one animal.' One Man—his name Adam-Eve, or Humanity, as you choose—or, perhaps, when he finds himself, his name is Christ."

He looked again at Linden, sitting with that pleased and quiet light upon his face. The sermon was not extraordinary, the congregation the average village and country congregation, the church had no especial grace of interior or exterior. Linden was not habit-bound to it, he did not hug the letter of its creed. Any one of those around might say: "No, he does not belong to any church—which is a great pity! No, it isn't his church." Yet Curtin saw that Linden, sitting there, loved this place, the feel of the folk around him, the sense of what they were doing, were striving to do, and, on the whole, were slowly doing. He comprehended that to

Linden it was very simply his own, as were the other two churches of Alder, and the colored church down the river, and the Greek church at Odessa. He saw that Linden's possessive was large—Linden's and Marget Land's.

Miss Darcy sat very still, her thin hands crossed in her lap. At first she had listened to the sermon, but now she was in the old church in the old city, and there was another congregation around her, and another clergyman, a kinsman, in the pulpit. At first it was like opening a potpourri jar, and then warmth and light came back to the rose leaves. "I am there, they are here! Never could I do this or feel this until now—or I did it so weakly and palely that it did not seem to count!"

The sermon ended. "Let us pray. . . . Let us sing." Benediction followed, then a moment's pause, and then the folk turned from the pews and moved slowly toward the doors. There were greetings for Sweet Rocket, and Sweet Rocket greeted in return. All had a grace of friendliness. Anna Darcy thought: "That is another thing that has come or is coming! What does it matter now if your name is or is not on the register of a church? It didn't use to be so. Something gracious and understanding, invisibly binding, is coming!" She thought: "Those two are the most beautiful here, but in their degree all are beautiful. And all move on to completer beauty. Oh, life is coming alive!"

They drove through Alder and by Alder highway, and at last upon that lovely forest road to Sweet Rocket. Curtin and Linden fell to talk of their student days, of such and such teachers and mates, and such and such happenings. "I had forgotten that!" said Curtin, and again, "I had forgotten that!" At last he said, abruptly, "You've got an astounding memory!"

Linden answered, "Oh, we learn how to use and deepen memory!" The smell of the forest, the voice of the forest, circled and penetrated. "I should like to know how you do it," said Curtin.

"It is like all other things. Practice makes perfect."

"It is not only remembering. You remember with a strange understanding of things. You direct later light upon the past. The line is there, the form is there, even the color and tone, but you make it understood as I am very certain we did not understand it then! I see now what we were doing! It's intelligent at last, and bigger."

"All that you have," said Linden, "isn't too much to apply to the past. The past has served you, now serve the past. Serve and redeem! Bring it up, even and great, into the present! To understand past time is to have present power. Only by understanding it can you love it, unless you wish to remain infant and love with infant's love."

The many-hued woods went on, the leafy, narrow, remote road, the scents and sounds, the miracle of many centered into sole delight. The air was so fine you could gather what the upper air must be. Daniel and Bess, the phaeton, the four, stepped and rolled through a magic world, artist world of the Ancient of Days. Here was the river and the flashing water of the ford.

That afternoon they walked upstream as far as the overseer's house. It was shining, late afternoon. They saw, seated on the porch and the porch steps, Roger Carter and his wife, with Guy, her brother, who worked on the farm, and old Mr. and Mrs. Morrowcombe, her parents, paying their Sunday visit. A little Roger, three years old, played absorbedly with a chinquapin string and a rag doll that his grandmother had brought him.

"Let us go across to them," said Marget. "Just so did my father and mother use to sit."

Carters and Morrowcombes made them welcome. Linden and Curtin sat upon the porch steps, Tam beside them. Miss Darcy now played with the young Roger and now listened to Mrs. Morrowcombe's gentle, flowing talk of turkeys, and rag carpets, and Sam come home from the war. Mary Carter had dark eyes and wavy hair, bright color in a round cheek, a shy and tender smile—a Murillo face. She sat holding a year-old babe, and she talked shyly and listened with intent eyes. There listened, too,

old Mr. Morrowcombe, with a long, white beard, and a gnarled hand resting on a stick marvelously carved by himself in prison, long ago, in the old war. Roger Carter proved a quick, dry talker, with not a little wit and power of mimicry. He had a way of throwing what he saw and heard and concluded into a homely story, both telling and amusing. He seemed to love to make Linden and Marget laugh, and they loved to draw him out. Curtin saw with what skill they opened fields to him where he might rejoice in his talent. He saw how they understood fellowship.

Presently Marget asked Mary if she might take Miss Darcy into the house and out on the back porch and to the lilac hedge. "Certainly, Miss Marget, you go right in! It's all straight. Go upstairs, too. Anywhere you like."

The two went. "This was mother's room. Here I was born. When I was a little girl I slept in this tiny room next door. The rain on the roof drummed me to sleep. This was the boys' room. This is the back porch, where we did much of the work. It is so lovely and broad! There is the old well. Yonder is the lilac clump where once, in May, I saw the Spirit of the Lilac."

When, half an hour later, they walked homeward along the river bank, there renewed itself the question of prolonging a visit. "Well, I'm going to stay, anyhow," declared Curtin. "I

like it better here than at that camp. If you will keep me a month—"

"Oh, we will!"

Anna Darcy said: "I can't stay that long. But I'll stay just as long as I can."

That matter settled, they walked on, quietly, in the amber and violet hour. There was a sound of water, a smell of wood smoke. The house rose before them, richly colored in the sunset.

VIII

THE weather changed. On the heel of soft sunshine and quietude came autumn storm, wind and rain, lashed trees, leaden and heavily sagging cloud. In the late afternoon Zinia appeared at the parlor door. "Miss Marget, there are two men on horseback. They've come over Rock Mountain and missed their way. They say it's getting late, and they say, could we take them in for the night?"

"I'll go see," said Linden, and left the room.

"Of course you will?"

"Yes, of course," answered Marget. "I had better go see about the room." Curtin and Miss Darcy, left alone, watched the flame. At last Curtin said, abruptly, "Had you ever thought of humanity moving on into superhumanity?"

"I think that I have been blind and deaf to a great many things! I suppose I thought that there would be slow, general improvement. But I did not think of marked betterment here. I thought of the soul at death springing alive into heaven."

"Or hell?"

"Yes, we were taught that."

"And it was going to reach heaven or hell at one stride! No degree here, no degree there!"

"It was irrational!"

"Naturally, being yet in Time, there are those ahead. Some cross the line earlier than others."

Marget returned. "They are two young men, foresters, I think, from the government purchase on Rock Mountain. They are wet through. Mancy has built them a fire and Richard is looking after them." She stood by the window. "The gray rain is chanting up and down the mountains! Queen Rain and King Wind!"

Curtin put a chair for her as she came to the hearth. She sat down, and bending herself, looked into the fire. She held her hands to the flame and appeared to gather it into them. "The fire!" said Marget, "the spirit that is fire, that is will—that are living, endless powers, the Host of the Lord!"

There fell a silence that was voice. Then said Anna Darcy: "I have always said, 'I remember—I remember.' But since I came to Sweet Rocket I have learned far and away more of how to remember."

Marget turned toward her with a great sweetness. "When we have found a good thing we so naturally wish to share it! Now you must learn the Universal Man's present sharing—and his future sharing. You who have always said, 'I remember,' and who have been unselfish, will have little trouble."

Her look included Curtin, who sat staring into the fire. He drew a long breath. "Two weeks ago I should have said that adventure and youth had passed from my life."

"You are just beginning to find them! Henceforth you will find rest and romance, salt in life and the true wine and the uncloying honey and the bread of right wheat. You will find water of Moses's spring, and the Burning Bush."

The rain and the wind sang against the pane. The fire made shape upon shape. The high, inward vibration lowered, but it left a memory of itself. There was the Jericho rose in the sandal box to say, "When there comes moisture again to my root, then shall I bloom again!"

Linden entered the parlor with the two guests, now with dried clothing, rested and refreshed. It was growing dusk. The room looked warm and bright to them, a happy haven after a battering day. They were young men; twenty-seven, twenty-nine, forestry graduates, resuming forestry after an interlude of war. Linden presented them. "Mr. Randall—Mr. Drew."

The evening closed in stormy. They had supper, a small bright feast, with talk and laughter. Randall proved lively, good company. Drew was much the quieter of the two. Supper over, they returned to the big parlor and the generous fire. The boy Jim had brought in a great armful of wood. It was a night to heap logs, as the rain drummed against the pane.

Randall was talkative. He flowed like a mountain stream, trilled like a care-free bird.

Forests and forestry came into the room. It appeared that both had had from childhood a taste, not to say a passion, for woodland life. Randall had lived in the country, so it came natural. But Drew had lived in a city. But forests were a passion with him; he had to get into them, and did so at every chance, and at last left for good a clerkship in a stockbroker's office, and scraped together enough for that course in a forestry school. This gave him surface learning, but he exhibited a deeper knowingness, gained somewhere. "Drew's like an Indian in the woods!"

"No. Not like an Indian," said Drew.

Linden asked, "Like whom, then?"

He sat in a corner of the great fireplace, Tam, who came indoors upon nights like these, lying at his feet. "Drew," said Randall, "tell them about that night in France! He's got a curious story. He won't tell it to everybody. But I don't know—somehow we're all at home here." His quick song went on. "You see, my folk and Drew's are English. We're just a generation from fields and things that we've heard about all our lives. So when England went in, we thought we'd better go over, and we did. We were in the same company, and this was before Verdun. Go on, now, Drew!"

Drew began at once, without prelude, his eyes

upon the blind man. "It was something that happened to me. Sometimes I think that it was a dream, and then I know that it wasn't. I'm more and more certain as time goes on that it wasn't. I've got a kind of feeling about Reality, that we are like swallows skimming it. I suppose that now and then a swallow tumbles into it. Well, it was a big, dark wood, fairly early in the war. A detachment, sent we did not know by whom nor for what, moved through it from one station to another. I was second lieutenant. Well, there came news of a trap, and most of us turned off in a hurry, out of that wood. But—I don't to this day know how it was—as many as twenty were away from the rest, sent to find out something, somewhere. It was night, and there was no path. We got the warning, too, and we swung round and tried to get back to the main body. There came a spattering of shot. There were men besides ourselves in that wood. They rose like partridges and struck like hawks. We struck back. There was fighting. Something came down on my head like a falling tree. I remember that I thought it was a falling tree. Then everything went black, and it seemed both a long time and a short time till dawn.

"It came at last, dawn. I sat up, and it had been a falling tree. My forehead had an aching lump and a gash, but luckily just a branch had struck me and I had rolled clear. It was a very

old oak, brought down by the high wind. Upon the branch beside me was growing mistletoe. I wouldn't touch it, for I thought, 'It is not for me to touch it, but surely it saved my life!' There was gray light, and one red streak far down the forest where, after a time, would be the sun. And then I remembered that it was Lutwyn who had saved my life, crying out, and pushing me away, where I had thrown myself down for one moment's rest. I looked beyond the mistletoe and I saw that the tree had caught and pinned down a man. I crept on hands and knees, for I was dizzy yet, and I found Lutwyn. He lay pale and twitching, his leg and part of his body under the trunk of the oak. It was very still and lonely in the forest, and the first cold light made me shiver, and I was afraid of the mistletoe, so near. I got Lutwyn from under the tree, and it took all my strength to do it. The spring that we called Red Deer was hardly a spear throw away. I had on a cap of otter skin, and I filled this with water and brought it back to Lutwyn. When I had dashed it over his face and put it between his lips, he sighed, and came to himself, opening his eyes and trying to sit up. He said, 'I thought it would catch you, and I tried to thrust you out of its way—'

"I said: 'Are you badly hurt? Can you walk?'

"He tried, but he could only drag himself a little way, holding by a branch of the tree. The

light had grown stronger, the red line down the forest was a red splash. We were both thinking of Guthlac and his men, who were after us because, being outlaws, we had set upon and stopped a bullock wagon and helped ourselves. We had strong belief that when they found us they would hang us. We had no great start of them.

"Lutwyn said: 'You go on, Oswy! I'll make myself at home here, by the mistletoe.'

"That couldn't be. I couldn't carry him. He was, if anything, a little taller and larger than I. He tried again to move, but it was not his leg alone; his body had been hurt, terribly hurt, I now saw. He could not make a step. It was I who drew him back to the tree. He settled down into the hollow made by the trunk and a bough, and I looked at his hurts, but could do little for them. I saw that they were filled with danger. The mistletoe grew so near him. I looked at it, and I wished it would heal. Lutwyn said: 'Now you go on, Oswy! I don't want you to be hanged.' I said, 'Save your breath!' and sat down beside him. We rested side by side against the tree, and he said that he was not in pain, but only now and then drowsy. He was very clear in his mind and wanted to talk. I listened for Guthlac and his men, and looked at the mistletoe. The sun was up now and it was growing gold—the mistletoe—a great bunch of it. I did not hear Guthlac. It was likely to

be some time before they found us, having to wait till day to see our track. Now and then I felt Guthlac's rope around my neck. And then I looked at the mistletoe, and it seemed to be growing by Woden's chair. Then Lutwyn came awake again and we talked. We were twin brothers. We talked of when we were boys, and of our mother, and Lutwyn the Strong, our father, and of places we had seen and the earth we had trod. The Earth that was us, we thought, springing up in us all toward Father Sun. And all the wrong that we had done went away, and the mistletoe grew more golden. He drowsed away for longer and longer times.

"Far away I heard Guthlac's horn. It blew, and another answered. They had found our track and were drawing together. Lutwyn waked, and heard it, too. 'But there's another horn for me,' he said. 'Don't you hear that one?' He had slipped from the hollow of the oak and his head was on my knee. The horn blew louder and nearer. The mistletoe was all golden. I could feel Guthlac's rope around my neck. But I was glad they would not hang Lutwyn. He was dead.

"The horn blew louder in the wood. I heard them shouting. The mistletoe was burning gold. I said, 'Woden, Woden! we be brothers, Lutwyn and me!' They broke upon us, shouting, and all went black—"

Drew stopped speaking. He sat bent over,

looking at the fire. Putting down a hand he stroked Tam. Straightening himself, he looked at Linden and Marget. "All that was actual," he said. "Just as actual, just as real, just as day and night and earthly and conscious as this room and the fire and we six and the dog!"

He made a movement toward Randall. "You tell the rest."

Randall's voice came in. "The detachment drove the Germans out of the wood and chased them a good long way. It was dawn when we stopped and went back to gather up our hurt and dead. There were a dozen dead, Germans and us, and a good many hurt, all scattered through that wood that was full of big trees. We found Drew propped against a very great, old, fallen tree. He had been struck over the head in the hand-to-hand fighting and had a cut or two besides. Nothing odd in that, but what was odd was that he was cherishing a dead German—had his head lying on his knee! Of course, enemies lying as close as lovers wasn't any novelty! But Drew had crept some little way to this man, and had tried to stop his bleeding, all there in the dark, and had given him water, and then had gathered him into his arms. He said: 'Yes, he was Drew, but he was one Oswy, too. Yes, that was a German, but it was Lutwyn, too.' He said they were twin brothers. We were used to men out of their heads, so we gathered him up and took him on.

He wanted us to stop and bury the German, but there wasn't time for that. The funny thing is that he certainly isn't out of his head now! Yet he still believes that story, though he won't tell it to every one. . . ."

The rain beat, the fire burned. "I've tried to get back," said Drew, "back to Guthlac and the bullock wagon and why we were outlaws. If I could find even now what we did—if I could get farther back still, to the point where we decided to do it, and redecide, decide more wisely, having long light upon it, I think that even now I could change in some way the whole world! Changing it to Lutwyn and me would mean changing the whole texture."

"You are right," said Linden. "And seeing it that way you have begun to put your change into operation."

The fire shined, the rain beat upon the panes, the wind came with the impact of sea in storm. Pictures shifted before the inner eye. Lands and times held the earth. Now they seemed foreign pictures, now there was a faintly conscious participation. "We are Earth, to-night," said Linden. "All these are in our memory. Earth is growing conscious. A conscious Spirit. That is what we mean to-day when we say, 'There is a new world just beneath the horizon.'"

IX

IN the night the storm ceased. The household woke to a high, clear, stirring morning, the clouds riding in archipelagoes with, between isles, a sea bluer than the Ægean. The shaken trees had spread a Persian carpet. All the flowers hung heavy with wet, snails marched on the paths, Sweet Rocket glistened.

Randall and Drew must ride away, so at ten o'clock Jim brought their horses.

Marget and Anna Darcy walked through the flower garden. "I am going to Mimy's house for a little. Will you come, too?"

Marget had a basket upon her arm. "It is full of silk and cotton scraps for Julia's quilts. The day I met you in Alder I begged of two or three friends and they gave me all this! It is Julia's intense industry and happiness, piecing quilts."

"Who is Julia?"

"Mimy's lame daughter. Lame in her body and just a little lame in her mind."

"Where does Just So come in?"

"Oh, he's Susan's! Susan has been away upon a visit, but she's home again. Zinia is Mimy's

niece, and Jim is her grandson. Mimy and her husband, old Uncle Jack, who is dead, 'belonged,' as they call it, to the Lindens. When Richard bought Sweet Rocket she was living in Alder, and she rode over in a wagon one day and told him she wanted to come home—just like me!" said Marget, with a happy laugh. "The old cabins were tumbling down. Richard built her a real house. He said that any who came and said, 'This is home'—" Her dark eyes looked afar to the valley rim.

"Where does Mancy live?"

"Over there, behind the big field. He and Delia, his wife, and William, who is Roger Carter's right-hand man."

Mimy, in the kitchen, was singing:

> "Roll, Jordan, roll!
> I want to go to heaven to hear Jordan roll.
> Oh, roll, Jordan, roll!"

Marget stopped at the door. "We're going to your house, Aunt Mimy, with quilt pieces for Julia."

Mimy interrupted her singing. "Are you gwine take company?"

"Well, she isn't company."

"You'll find a mighty mess in that house! I don't think I ought to let you go, Miss Marget! You see, Susan's been away, and Julia can't get around, and when Zinia comes from the big

house she wants to *read!* instead of straightening up. I reckon you better not go."

Marget laughed. "Aunt Mimy, you know how we'll find the house!"

"Well, go along!" said Mimy, gloomily. "Julia 'll be glad to get the pieces."

They left the kitchen behind them.

"And I want to go to heaven to hear Jordan roll!"

Marget's low, warm laughter sounded again. "Her house is like a pin, and she's so proud of it, and she wouldn't for anything miss having you see it! The same little rhyme is said to every guest we have. And '*read!*' Mimy's so proud to see Zinia sit at a table and read! Jim can read, too, but he doesn't like to. But Zinia is fond of books."

Mimy's house rose beside the orchard, a pretty cottage with a dooryard filled with cockscomb and larkspur and marigold. At the gate grew a bush of myrrh, and the porch had over it a gourd vine. Just So sat in the middle of the path, playing with red and blue blocks. At the sound of voices Susan appeared, a clear-brown, neat, and active woman. "Just So, don't you clutter up the path like that! Come this-a-way, Miss Marget!" She took them across the porch, where the gourd vine made so pleasant a pattern, into a little parlor, bright as a pin. They sat and talked, and then Susan said that she would

bring Julia, and, leaving the room, reappeared, pushing a wheeled chair. In this sat Julia, who was almost a middle-aged woman, and had a slender, pleasing face, and was only a little lame in her mind.

Marget emptied the basket. "Oh, my!" said Julia, and again, "Oh, my!" With eager fingers she spread the bits of silk and velvet and satin and striped or flowered ribbon. "Flower-garden pieces! It will be a flower-garden quilt. I'll make a quilt like they have in heaven!"

"Shoo! Julia!" exclaimed Susan. "They don't have quilts in heaven. It ain't cold there!"

Julia's face took on an imploring, almost a frightened look. She turned to Marget. "If they don't have quilts I won't have anything to do!"

With all that she knew of Marget Land, Miss Darcy could but wonder at the luminous sweetness, the depth and the play with which Marget, seated by Julia, dealt with the latter's fears. All the bright pieces were spread over the knees of both. "In heaven you'll put rose and blue together, and this violet and green. And look how these flowered pieces go! Your quilts are for warmth and beauty, Julia, aren't they? Shut your eyes and see warmth and beauty, warmth and beauty!" She put her hand over the lame woman's hand. The latter's plaintive look changed, her eyes brightened, and she nodded her head. "Yes! To keep us warm;

and they are lovely, like the flowers! Warm like the sun is!"

"Yes. Warmth and beauty—warmth and beauty! So in heaven you're to keep on with warmth and beauty. And you'll learn, too, how well wisdom goes with them. Their quilts aren't just like these quilts, but you won't care for that. You'll be putting together and giving beautiful, bright things!"

Julia caressed a length of flowered ribbon. "That's what I think. They're warm and beautiful, warm and beautiful! And every one I give a quilt to says, 'I'm so glad I've got one!'"

"When you put that piece in, think 'warm and beautiful' for Mrs. Gray. She gave it to you. And Miss Lucy Allen gave the beautiful blue piece."

When they had quitted the porch with the gourd vine, and the dooryard, and the gate by the myrrh bush, and were under the orchard trees, Marget said: "She's been making quilts for twenty years. Perhaps two a year, and into each one goes I do not know what dim thinking and feeling, warmth and beauty, for such and such a one!"

It was Miss Darcy's habit to rest a little in her own room after dinner. In the midafternoon, coming downstairs, she found the door of Linden's study open. Linden turned his head, hearing her step. "Come in! Here are Marget and Curtin."

It was the first time she had entered this room. Her eyes took it in as she crossed the threshold, and found it a simple, grave place, as simple and grave and charged with its own aroma and spirit as a pine wood. It spread a large room, with plenty of space for pacing up and down. The bookcases, the desk, the chairs, an old, long cane and wood sofa were for use. The plain walls held a few prints. In one of the deep windows stood a large globe.

Curtin put Miss Darcy a chair. "I've just come in," he said. There had grown between them, beginning the morning upon which she found him fishing, or not fishing, in the gorge that closed the valley, a quiet liking and friendship, with a sense, perhaps, of standing even in the inner world. "Linden was saying—"

Marget sat before the desk not far from the fireplace, in which burned a light flame. She had been writing, and Linden dictating from his big cane chair by the long window. She had turned from the desk and he had moved his chair to where he sat, half in firelight, half in tawny sunlight. To Anna Darcy's sense the room had strongly that luminousness which in some sort she found in the whole of Sweet Rocket, in valleys, hills, house, and folk. The whole made a sun-filled cluster that, acting as a cluster, redoubled so all effects. But undoubtedly Linden and Marget were the center of the cluster.

"I am glad you have come in," said Curtin. "Linden was speaking of their life here—"

"I told you, you remember, driving through the woods, of our outer life," Marget said. "Sitting here before the fire we had begun to talk of that far larger life within the outer."

Linden spoke. "Martin asked me, and I was telling him as clearly as I could. It is not wholly clear, you must not think, to Marget and me, our progression and our life. 'Man is a bridge,' says Nietzsche. A living bridge that crosses from himself to himself. Always the provisional, the halfway, gone afar even while we say, 'Here am I!' How to name a thing that travels so fast! The life of Marget and me changes and grows, as does yours and yours. The history of one—the history of all. There is at once divine difference, divine sameness. No hand and no word will hold our life!"

"I don't know anyone like you," said Curtin.

"No. But you will presently begin to know more and more who differ from us and yet who belong in the order—the order of those who are aware that present man is a bridge and who begin consciously to act, feel, and know in a larger existence."

"And that is still inward?"

"The world still calls it inward. To those in that existence inward and outward, past, present, and future, come into one. The old words, then, are but retained words of convenience.

As to the ultimate mind Martin and Richard, Marget, Anna, are but words of convenience, names for strands of experience. All are comprehended, combined, surpassed."

The sun lighted his hair, his bronzed face, his quiet eyes, the sight of which he seemed so little to miss. After a moment's pause he spoke on: "To-day many and many are aware of the richness of destiny. Some more so, some less so, but aware! Faculties that in a host are but germinal build in and for others realities. The momentary, superficial present, not being the true present, there *are*, not 'there have been' since the dawn of history, many such men and women. Very many; a host. There are many to-day; to-morrow there will be more. If you regard with intentness you may see the new Humanity forming."

"What of those who neither dream, nor divine, nor wish, who come on so slow?"

"Their not divining nor dreaming nor wishing is more apparent than real. All come on. The slowest, who thinks he has no direction, is drawn unconscious until the day when he discovers the compass."

"Will any never cross?"

"I don't think so."

"And when the last human being has crossed?"

"Then will the others come on into humanity —they that we call the animals. And those

behind them will lift to where they were. But our wave goes on into the spiritual world that is the world of subtler matter, vaster energy, understanding at last, love at last, beauty at last. Well, Marget and I are conscious travelers thitherward, as are you and you."

"Ah, you are ahead of me!"

"And of me!"

"In some ways we may be ahead. And in others you may have store of energy and experience that sets you ahead. That matters not in the least. Whitman said that when he said:

> "By my side or back of me, Eve following,
> Or in front, and I following her, just the same.

Like him, too:

> "Content with the present and content with the past,

yet lassoing the past and the present with the future!"

Curtin shook his head. "You have powers that are not mine."

"If we have them, they will be yours. Marget and I think that we have, as it were, a blueprint. But not yet do we walk in the full and great temple! We do faintly and weakly what one day we shall do with all vigor. And many things that we do not yet dream we shall do! And you also, you and Anna. When you begin to feel continuity, when no matter where you move you take possession of yourself—"

He rose from his chair, and, standing before them, put a hand upon Curtin's shoulder and a hand upon Anna Darcy's. "'With all your getting, get understanding.' 'The kingdom of heaven is within you.' God is *I am.*"

The sun struck through the western window, the fire burned, the room was lighted and warmed. Flame and stirring air made a low singing.

X

THE next day Drew came back. Curtin, seated on the porch, saw him cross the river and ride up by the cedars. Shutting his book, he descended the steps to meet him. "Good day, Drew! Glad to see you back! Nothing wrong?"

Drew dismounted. "No. I wanted to talk to Mr. Linden."

Jim, coming around the house, took the horse. "He's out somewhere on the place," said Curtin. "Miss Land, too. But they will be back by twelve. Did you ride from Rock Mountain this morning?"

"Yes. It's not so far once you know the way."

He took the chair that Curtin hospitably pushed forward, and sat apparently in a brown study, while the other speculated. At last said Drew: "This is a good, big farm with room, I shouldn't be surprised, for another worker. At any rate, I've ridden over to ask Mr. Linden to employ me."

"Do you like farming better than forestry?"

"I like it better plus some other things." His

eyes swept the hills that shut in the vale. "There is rich forest here. Any woodland that he has I could cut and replant. I know something of farming, too, and I can learn more. I'd give good work in return for the other things that they can teach me, and that I want."

He regarded Curtin with brooding eyes. "Ever since I could remember I have been beset by the past. A man told me once that I was conscious there, but hadn't co-ordinated it with the present and the future. It was some time ago, and he went away at once and I never found his like again—until I came here. I don't think there are many of them, living at any one time. The only wisdom I've got is the wisdom of going where I think I may find help."

"How about Randall?"

"I'm very fond of Randall. But he can't help me here, nor I him. He thinks it's just my 'queerness.' There's a man in Washington who will be mighty glad to get my job. He's a friend, too, of Randall's. I want to stay here for a year. Then I may go foresting again with Randall. I don't want to lose him. If Mr. Linden can't use another man this winter perhaps he will take me in the spring. In that case I'll go, and come again. I've talked it all out with Malcolm Smith, our chief at Rock Mountain. Brown in Washington will come down right away."

At twelve appeared Linden. He stood in the

hall door. "Is it you, Drew? I will be down in a moment to shake hands." They heard his step going up to his room. "Blind, and not blind!" said Curtin. "There's some profound development of sensibility."

"I am not a scholar," said Drew. "I haven't got the names to give to things. That's a part of my need."

Marget and Miss Darcy came up from the river path. They had been, it seemed, to the overseer's house. Marget gave her hand to Drew. "I am glad to see you again!" There was no surprise in her warm and happy voice. "Your room is all ready for you."

They had dinner. When it was over Drew went with Linden into his study. The three others lingered a little in the pleasant, wide hall. The day was again right October; amber and garnet and sapphire; balm with nothing of lethargy.

Said Curtin, "When we come and come, what do you do at last?"

Marget laughed. "Oh, you come and go! You never really go, you know! But you have to take your bodies here and there over earth. But once come, we keep you and you keep us!"

"You know people all over the earth?"

"Yes."

"Do they write?"

"Oh, now one and now another writes! But we hardly need letters. That is, they are needed, of course, for minute information, for

news of bodily movement. But there is communion whether we write or not."

Marget returned to the dining room to talk with Zinia. Anna Darcy went up to her chamber for her rest, and Curtin took his book to the porch.

The books at Sweet Rocket. He fell to pondering them. There were, perhaps, five thousand, not in one room, but up and down. Many were old, and many neither old nor new, and many new. They seemed to touch all subjects.

Curtin, pondering, going deeper and deeper, fell into some border country of Reality. With swiftness, with electric shock, he touched, not thousands of leaves of paper printed over, but conscious, intelligent, and powerful life. Or rather, it seemed to touch, to descend upon him, to well through him, coming down, coming from within, occupying space internal to all this tranquil, outer, October space. It was presence, it was personality, overwhelming. Books! What were true books? Will, Desire, Intelligence, living, active, not unclothed or unbodied, living Presence, present Activity, being in mass, active being, present and active here in this valley and present and active elsewhere, present and active throughout he knew not what infinity! He felt again that wide and deep shock of reality. The world lived!—had always lived—only he had not known it.

Vigor streamed into vein and nerve. He

sprang to his feet, and, leaving the porch, moved down past the cedars to the river path, and along it. "It is not Richard Linden and Marget Land, nor the one nor the other! It is all of us. It is the Whole. The Whole has found them and is bringing them in accord." He felt exquisitely a touch of bliss. "It will bring me in accord, too. Drew and Miss Darcy and me—and many others." He felt a satisfaction such as he had never dreamed. "All others. One by one, all accorded, all remembered. The Already Remembered, forever increasing in strength, gathering, drawing, the scattered and fragmentary and incipient!"

He walked, hardly knowing that he walked. "Goodness and largeness! The dawn of them is synchronous with the dawn of Allness. All our words, mercy, justice, love, wisdom, power, joy, are but terms for the natural, habitual feeling of the One who is Whole. It is not that they are 'virtues'! They are the hue and tone and sense of health!"

He went up the river as far as the overseer's house. Here, upon the bench built around the sycamore, he found old Mr. Morrowcombe, who had stayed over with the Carters. In his old brown clothes, with hair and long beard, pale as the pale patches of the sycamore trunk and boughs, leaning forward upon his stick, he looked, as it were, the huge old tree come forth into human form.

Curtin sat down beside this old man. The cane upon which the elder leaned was now close to his eye and he saw that it was covered with finely cut words. Thick, and shaped like a shepherd's crook, the graving ran all over it. "May I look?"

"Surely!" said Mr. Morrowcombe, and gave it into his hand. "The year I was in prison at Camp Chase I carved around it the twenty-third psalm."

Curtin examined the quite beautifully done work. "Trust and Consolation in your hand—walking with them for fifty years!" He sat musing.

Mr. Morrowcombe's old, gentle voice began like the zephyr in the sycamore, whose beginning you could hardly guess. "Yes, sir! That staff's me now. Just as a good dog that goes with you gets to be you. It's helped me, week days and Sundays; that staff I made myself. I made it myself, and I didn't make it. I didn't make the tree that grew it and I didn't make the psalm; nor David that made the psalm. But I cut the staff from the tree and I carved the words there. So I reckon I have my part."

"You cut it in prison?"

"Do you see that piece just thar?" The old finger traced the line. "'*Thou settest me a table in the presence of mine enemies.*' I cut that deep and fierce!"

He looked at the river and then again at Cur-

tin. "Now, whatever it means, I know it doesn't mean what then I wanted it to mean!"

His old, gentle face grew meditative, contemplative. A more tranquil form and face it would have been hard to find. "I kind of sense the meaning, but I can't put it into words. But when you feel at last with folks and things you can't feel against them. When I was young I must have hated a lot of folk! I don't now."

"What is your healing herb?"

"Put yourself in his place. Don't oust him from the place, but understand him. Flow into him deep! Then you'll find that there is Something inside or above you and him which understands and straightens out both of you. Next thing you find is that you haven't got any real controversy."

"Do you call that something God?"

"That's what I call it. I used to think that you *had* to call it God. I don't now. But it's a mighty good word! We've hallowed it. It's the biggest word we've got."

"Mr. Morrowcombe, when we join God, don't you think we shall say 'I'?"

"*That* will say 'I.' Yes."

They sat gazing at the river and the colored hills. "Ain't this a lovely place?" said Mr. Morrowcombe. "It's like Beulah Land!"

"Do you ever talk to Mr. Linden?"

"Surely! Him and Marget Land. They're of those in our time who are remembered early."

He glided into one of his gentle silences. Curtin pondered that matter of re-membering, re-collecting, re-storing.

Said Mr. Morrowcombe, "I knew Marget Land when she was a little girl and came to Sunday school. She was baptized in our church, but she ain't now one of our church members. That used to grieve and puzzle me—make me a little angry, too, I reckon! Now I don't bother about it. She's in the Living Church, all right."

He looked up into the bronze and silver sycamore. "I've sat on this bench in old Major Linden's time, when John Land was overseer and lived in the house yonder. His wife, Elizabeth, was just the salt of the earth. Those children used to be playing around this tree. I remember Marget, a bare-legged, big-eyed little thing. She's sat by me often on this bench and made me tell her stories. Now it seems a long time ago, and now it seems yesterday!"

His voice sank again into the October sunshiny stillness. His lips closed, but Curtin felt him speaking on in thought and consciousness. It came to him, in another of those revelational flashings· "That is the ultra-violet of speech, the high, subtle, inaudible, continual speech! When we begin to catch it, when we begin to hear thought—" He felt again the shock of going together, of rivers pouring into ocean.

Mr. Morrowcombe's lips parted. "The war turned me serious, and I found religion two years

after the surrender. I'd tell her Bible stories. I had a kind of gift that-a-way. Roger Carter, that's my nephew as well as my son-in-law, has got the same gift, though it ain't always Bible stories that he tells—except I reckon as all true stories are Bible stories! I used to tell her about David and Jonathan, and Joseph and his brethren, and Ruth and Naomi, and Mary and Martha and Lazarus, in Bethany. . . . Mary and Martha in yourself, and Lazarus who was long dead but could be raised, and Christ, who could judge and portion and raise, all in yourself! She used to listen, sitting just there. She had mind then, and she's got mind now—more 'n I have in a lot of ways. She and him. Mind and goodness, and spirit that is power, and a body that you love to look at! They're the kind of folk that ought to be. Yes, sir, I was thinking when you came along of Marget sitting there, a little thing, and saying, 'Now tell me about the children of Israel'—or 'about Bethlehem,' as it might be."

With distinctness Curtin felt that which the old man also seemed to feel, for he turned his head, lowering it and his eyes a little, and smiling. The movement was precisely that of turning and smiling into a child's eyes. Again through Curtin poured that thrill of a freshness of knowledge. If this tree, this place, were strongly in a consciousness, in a memory, surely then that conscious spirit itself might in some

sort be felt here! At any rate, he was aware of Marget, though to all outward senses appeared only the warm-colored October air. He had again the sense of etheric life. He lost it. It was so bright, it was so transient! The unquenchable desire was to bring it lasting.

He presently walked back to Sweet Rocket House. Drew was on the porch. "I'm going to stay. I'll write to Brown, and ride to Rock Mountain to-morrow to tell Mr. Smith and Randall, and pack up my things."

XI

THE next day Drew returned to Rock Mountain to make his arrangements. "Why not ride with him?" Linden looked at Curtin. "There is a fair trail. You have an extraordinarily fine view from the top."

Drew urged it likewise. "But I haven't a horse."

"Roger Carter has a good saddle mare. He will be glad, I know, to let you have her."

Drew, mounted as he came, Curtin on Dixie, set out before noon for Rock Mountain. The cliffy crest that gave it its name peered above the southern hills and ridges facing Sweet Rocket. Crossing the river the two kept for some little distance to the Alder road, then at a pine tree left it for a just discernible track. "This is where we changed, Randall and I, the other day. Until we saw the river we thought that we were going to Alder, but we were going to Sweet Rocket instead."

The trees closing in behind them, they were plunged into forest. There was now no green save the green of occasional pine or hemlock. All was gold or red or russet. Moreover, the

earlier trees to turn were fast flinging their mantles upon the earth. The sky met less obstruction, the sunlight spread a royal carpet. The air equaled exhilaration. As Curtin rode he thought that he faintly remembered all the forests of the world. "Is it infectious? Is it because in some sort Drew remembers, or is it because I have been—and surely I *have* been—in all the forests of the world? Like him, I remember best the temperate and the northern forests, because in time they are the nearer."

For a while they rode in silence. There was only the sound of their own breathing and movement, and the very inner voice of the forest, low speech of branches that brushed them, break of twigs, flutter of wings, tap of woodpeckers, whisk of squirrel, and once, a little way off, the heavy whir of a pheasant. At last Drew broke the silence. "My mother died when I was fifteen years old, and my father when I was twenty. I remember my mother's mother and my father's mother and father. I know a good deal about their life after I was born and their life before I was born. I have a fair notion of my grandparents' parents, and I know something of the way of life of the generation behind that one. I have been told and I have read. Of course there are presently ancestors of whom I have been told nothing, and behind these countless others. Of course I know that people often imaginatively share the experience of

parents and kindred. They say: 'It must have been so and so with my mother and my father—or with my grandparents—or my ancestors generally. They had these experiences and they must have felt and done this way. It seems almost as if I were there!' I think when you say that you are beginning. But it's grown to be more than that with me. After all, what are you but your parents, your grandparents, your great-grandparents, and so on? Your experience under your immediate name and your experience under your old names—their names. And alike, what are they but you? Share and share, comprehend and comprehend, include and include! I tell you that I am aware of the pyramid behind this cleaving point that is talking to you. I *remember.*"

"Do you mean that you remember actually thinking, feeling, doing what men say your ancestors did?"

"I don't get it clear. It's all wrought into some kind of unity. I don't remember clearly sharp, isolated experiences—except that one time I told you about, and that was clear and sharp repetition. But I remember, all the same. I don't feel any wall between my father and myself, between my mother and myself, my grandparents and myself. You don't know how curiously I seem to share their life! Sometimes, lying still at night, I simply, naturally, am Edward Drew as well as Philip Drew. I look

out of the Edward Drew window—or out of the Andrew or Robert or Margaret or Janet window—and then I turn and look out of the Philip Drew window. I had a great-grandfather who was a sailor. I can't tell you what feel of the deck beneath my feet, what a sense of sea by day and by night, I have at times! . . . But then, of course, in the far back I must join many sailors. . . . I *am* those folk. That's my own life they led. I lead their life. Wherever they are, they lead mine!"

He fell silent, and Curtin, too, rode silent. They were now above the valley, their road climbing. Overpassing a great hill they came to a threadlike, green vale, and crossing this climbed Bear Mountain, behind which rose the great head of Rock. When they reached a gushing mountain spring they dismounted, and, seated on moss and leaves under a tall mountain linden, all palely gold, ate the bread and cheese and damson tart and drank the cider that Sweet Rocket had put in the bag they carried. Their feast ended, they rested on the springy, fragrant earth.

Drew began again. "Remembrance! If I had a hundred per cent better brain—and I suppose one day the brain of all of us will be a hundred, a thousand per cent, ahead of what it is now—I am convinced that I could remember not only down the stalk of myself, but out into the branches right and left. The tree conscious

from leaf to root, from root to leaf! The whole tree conscious, aware up and down and to and fro—and, as somewhere all the forest joins on, the forest conscious and aware up and down of its history. Then the forest runs into all the forests high and low. The everlasting Forest and all its adventures!" He looked as though he rode in that forest. "Out of it comes the Tree that sheds the forests! And never once need we lose consciousness in finding that Tree! That's what Mr. Linden said to me. He said: 'You're the Ash Yggdrasil. You're all things and all people. You share them and they share you. You're to extend, extend, your sense of that. The One is to come down and lay hold upon you—and still you shall find it home and yourself!'"

On they rode over Bear Mountain, and at last up Rock. Five hundred feet below the top lay a green depression named Hall's Gap. Here a half-dozen cabins made Hall's Town. The people now owned Rock Mountain, its rich forests and rushing waters. A road was in the making and that and other department plans brought to Hall's Gap preliminary groups, the present group being a surveying, engineering, and reporting one, with Malcolm Smith for head. Under him he had Cooper and Morris, Randall and Drew, with axmen and spademen hired from the mountain. The cabins in the Gap lodged them all.

Curtin and Drew reached this place before sunset. The men were coming in, dogs barked, the smell of coffee and bacon hung in the air. Randall welcomed them, and presently Malcolm Smith appeared and shook hands. They had supper in Hall's big double cabin, with Hall and Mrs. Hall and half a dozen flaxen-haired young Halls, but after supper they went to a neighboring cabin, for the time being their own. Pine knots blazed on the hearth. Malcolm Smith and Cooper and Morris, Randall and Drew and Martin Curtin stretched tired limbs and smoked and talked. Morris and Cooper presently played checkers. Malcolm Smith read the newspaper, but after a little put it down and talked. He talked of aviation, and wireless, and of Einstein's notion of space, and of atomic energy. "I've an idea that ideas, ideation generally, imagery, perhaps memory, are simply that energy functioning! We imagine, and that energy has constructed a form in ether. We use it blindly, weakly, unintelligently. But if—"

"I see."

"But if we used it enormously more strongly —and wisely—we'd be creators all right! It's getting very important to know what we do want to create. If we don't look out, presently we may find that our imaginations have life! We've got to choose, I suppose, what kind of life we'll give; silly or monstrous life, or intelligent, kindly, strong, beautiful life!"

Curtin enjoyed the evening on Rock. Flame and odor of burning pine, and the pleasantly grotesque shadows on the cabin walls, made for rich fancies. In one of the easy silences the men grouped in this brown and flame-hued place seemed to him genii, gathered here before they drove their roads over mountains or harnessed their plunging water steeds. He thought: "We are genii! How wonderful it is to be what we are—and shall be!"

Men at Hall's went to bed before ten. Curtin found in a small cabin a hard couch and honest sleep. He slept without turning till five of the morning, when he waked with a great sense of refreshment. "Where I have been I don't know, but it was where vigor flows!" The stars shone in at his window. He lay still for a few minutes, then rose. The air was not too chill. He found when he was dressed that he was warm enough. Opening the cabin door he went out, moving softly so as not to waken Drew and Randall. The morning star hung in the east, and near it the moon in her last quarter. The cold, first hyacinth of dawn streaked the sky. Drew had pointed out the path to the top of the mountain. Curtin, finding it, climbed it alone. Half an hour brought him to the summit. When he reached it the earth was bathed in the cool and violet first light. He found a great projecting rock, shaped like a chair, and took his seat here. The planet, from gold, was become

silver, and the moon hung like a dream canoe. Here or there mist hid the vast expanse below, but for the most part earth lay clear. The outthrust rock that was his seat gave him two-thirds of the circle.

Stillness with depth and power possessed Curtin. He looked out, and down, and over. Range on range, with narrow vales between, rolled the mountains. In the strengthening light the autumn hue of them gave desert tints; then he picked out clearings, and white points that were hamlets and farmhouses. He turned eyes to where would be Sweet Rocket, though he could not see that valley. It was dawn. Richard Linden would be up. Perhaps, guessing that Curtin might watch dawn brighten from this rock, he might be here in mind and spirit.

Even as he thought this, the presence of Linden not there but here, or both here and there, came to Curtin in a wave. He felt company in solitude, doubled life. And not, as he presently perceived, Linden only. Linden meant thousands of others, as thousands of others meant Linden. Thousands and thousands. . . . That was himself . . . thousands and thousands.

He looked north and east and west; by rising and moving he looked south. The horizon rim lay very far. Using knowledge, he let it farther drop away, drop away. Underneath him was the bulk of the earth. Use power and make it as crystal, penetrable as water or air! Over-

head and all around was air, thinning afar into ether. He saw his globe in space and time. A ten-minute road of light ran between it and the sun. He sat very still, but within he moved into the land of contemplation. Here much time came into no-time, so subtle swift was motion. He entered into touch with much for which he had not yet found name or names. He might say, there is deep water and rich land. He might say, the world is other than we thought it. There are Americas ripe for discovery, and there are farther and future Americas forming.

By degrees might lessened. Muscle could not yet hold, nor sense be aware. He came nearer surface. Yet still there was vision. Phosphor was paling, the moon a dim curve of pearl, and all the spread of earth in stronger light. Curtin gazed, and the eyes of the mind outran the eyes of the flesh. Not just Virginia, but all the forty-eight states. Not just the forty-eight, but all America, Canada, and Mexico, and the islands and the republics of the South. He looked to the Atlantic and saw on the farther side Europe and Africa, and on to the east Asia and the Pacific. He saw the continents and the nations. It was not so much that he saw their earth, their body, though he saw that, too. But he saw them, touched them, heard them, as persons. The most of them had lately been at fierce war, fibers of each dissenting, but the bulk warring. Exhausted from war, haggard and

torn, yet still they made gestures with broken weapons. He saw them in the throes of economic and political change, of change from knowledge to knowledge, and of religious change. He saw traits and actions, deep, deep; yesterdays at the point of to-day, and all the morrows being built of yesterdays and to-days. He saw as it were stain and chaff and guilt, and through all these white-running Fire and Life and Upspringing. They were Persons, but a greater Person held them. Light broke. He saw the earth and the world and the heavens as Person. Upon him broke in deluge the vaster Selfhood.

The sun rose over Rock Mountain, the long ranges and the vales. The air had the exquisite fresh energy of Hope. Curtin moved down the path to the cabins. All his being seemed lit and harmonized. "It is what the old saints called conversion. My times fall into the hand of the One that I Am!"

The rosy light shone on Hall's below him as it shone on Sweet Rocket and Alder and the Virginia farms and villages and towns, and the farms and villages and towns of every state, and of all the Americas, and of the earth. Fragrant smoke rose from the chimneys. He heard the cheerful voices. A great love of the neighbor pervaded Curtin's consciousness, and with it entered the neighbor. His consciousness and the neighbor's consciousness became to a degree one.

XII

THE men at work had breakfast at Hall's in great beauty of weather. Afterward Curtin went with them along the proposed line of road. It proved a cheerful group, doing basic work well. The wine of the air and the lift of the earth and the beams of the sun helped amain. Axes rang, pick and shovel sounded. There was a center of work and there were outlying explorations. One hallooed to another. Morris was a master whistler, and you heard him like a redbird. Dave Hall had an interminable mountain ballad which he chanted as he worked. The buzz of the whole might be caught a long way over the mountain slope. Where they worked would be a great driveway for holiday folk. Young and old would pass that way, drinking the great views and the mountain air, pierced by beauty and largeness. Young and old, man and woman, a many and a many, through years heaped like sand!

"I like public work!" said Randall.

Drew answered: "I like it, too! If a scholar wants to help all and a teacher wants to help all, then going to school and teaching are public

works. But I'm coming back to help hold the forests for themselves and the people."

The morning went by quickly. At noon they had dinner by Indian Creek, that rushed and leaped. Three young Halls brought their food in baskets. It was spread under hemlocks, and they ate as it were in Arden. Dinner over, for half an hour they smoked and rested, stretched out beneath the trees.

"Tell us a story, Cooper!"

"I haven't one. Call Dave Hall over."

Dave came, tall and lank and brown as ale. "Sit under that tree, Dave, and tell us a story."

"I kin sing you about John Horn and Betsy at the dance."

"No. Tell us a story. Tell us about the mountain woman you began about the other day when the storm came up."

"Miss Ellice?"

"Yes, Miss Ellice."

Dave settled himself, with his back to the wine-red trunk of a hemlock. He was lean and tanned, wide-eyed, with a rich, drawling voice. "She was a see-er, that woman! This-a-time that I was telling about the mountain barked like a dawg at her, and showed its teeth and tried to bite—because she said an awful thing! She said that a time would come when every man and woman could do the things that Jesus did. She said Christ was an abstract description of the state of being folks would come to some

day, and Jesus was a great laborer who got there earlier than 'most anybody else. Said he was an example, sure enough, and a shower of the way, and who could help loving and wondering? But, 'cording to her, the best way to love Jesus was to *learn*. Stop jest do-less wondering, and grow! Said that Bethlehem and Nazareth and Galilee and Jerusalem and the New Jerusalem were where any man or woman was! Brother Carraway preached against her, and the mountain decided she wasn't healthy for it. She was living all alone, but the mountain decided that her cabin had better be emptier yet. She was a tall woman, about the age of my mother, and when you looked at her you'd think at first she wasn't strong. . . .

"Brother Carraway, after he had preached, went on home, but James Curdy always took what he found in the Word and tried to do it. What he found was usually right harsh. James had black eyes pushed 'way in, and long hair that always seemed to me to be blowing in a wind. He was awful fond of the word 'punish.' 'Now you're Punished!' 'God will Punish you!' He used to stride around and do his best to see that God didn't forget it. He was one to see that God did his duty, was James! He couldn't always make the mountain look at things same as he did, but after Brother Carraway's sermon, and the lightning striking Barber's house and killing old Mrs. Barber, he got two-thirds of it

worked right up to his feelings! That was Tuesday after Sunday, the lightning having struck on Saturday, and Mrs. Barber buried on Monday. He got about thirty men and boys together at John Williams, and a lot of them had had whisky—I don't know that this air interestin'? I could sing to you about John Horn and Betsy."

"No, go on! They were going to drive Miss Ellice off the mountain?"

"That was the intention. But this very Indian Creek about a mile from here makes a pool that's called Dumb Child Pool, because little Johnny Nelson that was dumb was drowned there. He fell in while the children were gathering nuts and he couldn't make them hear. Well, those that had had something stronger than water, they were all for seeing if Miss Ellice wasn't a witch! You know how folk used to prove a witch? That was about twenty of the eager ones, mostly young men. This wasn't very recent. I wasn't living on this mountain, but on Stormy Mountain over thar. I came here when Lucinda Nelson and me married. But I've heard all about it."

He spat vigorously. "Now, this is where her seeing with other eyes than like yourn and mine comes in! And how I come to know about some things that others don't was that that very Lucinda Nelson that I married happened to be at Miss Ellice's that day. Nelsons ain't afraid

of anything, and Miss Ellice had done them neighborly turns, sitting up with the sick and sharing coffee, and such as that. Anyhow, Lucinda was there, and Miss Ellice was braiding a rug and seemed extraordinarily cheerful and sunny. 'Long about two of the clock, as it were, she broke off her talk and finished her row, as it might be, without looking at it. Then she says to Lucinda—and Lucinda says she was that still and sunny, like a day that comes sometimes, that she was 'most afraid of her, just as you're 'most afraid sometimes of that kind of day, and yet you want to stay by it and it to stay by you—she says, says she, 'I'd like you to stay longer, Lucinda, but I find that I've got something to do! You go along, honey, and if I don't see you again I want you to remember that I like you and think you're on the right road!' And with that she got up and kissed Lucinda and stood in the door to watch her down the path. Lucinda went along home. Well, in about two hours, here they come, James Curdy and Mat Waters and Jonathan Morgan, and the others, drunk with whisky and with what they thought was the Word of God. They had a rope, and they meant the Dumb Child Pool."

He spat again. "'Twas Jonathan Morgan that told me, and Lucinda the rest of it. He was young and wild in those days. Jonathan says he hadn't been drinking, and for all that now and then he shouted with the rest he had

never seen a day so sunny and still, and just the minute after he'd shouted he'd see the whole as in a picture—his crowd and the Dumb Child's Pool, and Miss Ellice's cabin. Kind of saw it out of himself as it were, as though he was sitting on the bough of a tree looking, seeing thar as well as here. But the rest of them, I reckon, didn't see nothing but a witch and something exciting to do—unless it was James Curdy—and what he saw and felt Lord knows! Something like a nightmare, I reckon!

"Miss Ellice's cabin was high on the mountain. They stopped shouting when they got nearly up thar. They thought that if before that Miss Ellice heard them she'd just think it was some jamboree going on alongside of mountain. James Curdy had such a rule that he could bring even the drunken ones quiet for a bit. So they stole up the path, and Jonathan said that the cabin above them looked like a goldy leaf hanging still, or like an empty nest. So they went up in a string till they got to where the trees stopped and there was just some bushes and grass. And then they spread out, and went on in a bunch, and James Curdy cried in a loud voice, 'Woman, come forth!' But the shut door didn't open. Then he cried it again, and then he opened that tight mouth of his the third time. He had more learning than most of the mountain and he used big words. 'Blaspheming atheist, come forth!' But the others wouldn't

stay quiet any longer, and they shouted, 'Witch! Witch!'

"The door stayed shut, and Jonathan said that the cabin hung like a goldy leaf or a nest high up on a bright, still winter day. Jonathan says there was something so still and sunny there that it stilled the shouting. Then they opened the door, for it wasn't bolted, and those that could get in went in—James Curdy at the head. Those outside spread around so 's they could catch her if she run out. But Miss Ellice wasn't at home. She was gone.

"Thar was her half-braided rug and her chair and a little fire on the hearth. But she wasn't there. It turned out that she had taken a bag and a basket with her clothes, and a little money she had. And then Mat Waters found the letter on the table, and Jonathan Morgan read it, because James Curdy had left his spectacles at home. And if you'll believe me it was directed to 'James Curdy and Matthew Waters and Jonathan Morgan and their Company.' Inside it said just this: 'I've loved this cabin and this mountain. But now I remove myself from among you. Yet I love this place where I have been, and am, and shall be. Now abideth Faith, Hope, and Charity, but the greatest of these is Charity.' And then there was the name, Ann Ellice.

"Jonathan said half of them were still drunk and outrageous because they couldn't have their

fun at Dumb Child's Pool. A lot didn't even listen to the letter, seeing with their own eyes that Miss Ellice was gone. James Curdy listened, and his face got white and his eyes red coals. 'She's brazen!' says he. 'The devil talks Scripture to his own damnation!' He went out of door and looked about him. But most of the rest didn't see anything but that they'd lost something exciting to do. They began to break up the furniture. Then some one raked the coals and brands out over the floor and they set the straw bed on fire. But Jonathan took the letter and a book or two she had—Lucinda's got the books now. But James Curdy stood outside and looked down mountain. 'That's Harris's cabin a mile over thar. It's likely she's thar.' And he began to go down over mountain side. Mat Waters and Jonathan Morgan followed him, and so did about half of the others. The rest stayed to burn the cabin. The witch had gone off on a broomstick for them!

"The Harrises were a kind of lonely folk that didn't go much to church or nowhar. They mightn't even have heard of Brother Carraway's sermon. She might be thar, as James Curdy thought. But she wasn't. She had been thar, they said, jest a minute. She'd looked in on old Aunt Viny Harris and said she was going away. Said she was going to foot of mountain to Norwood, whar you get the train. Aunt Viny asked when she was coming back, and Miss Ellice

smiled and said she didn't think she was coming back. 'Whar was she going to live?' She said she didn't exactly know, but she had kinsmen who would take care of her. 'Aye,' said Aunt Viny, 'you're a master weaver and worker, and any folk ought to be glad to have such a handy woman around!' Which shows that the Harrises hadn't heard anything. And so Aunt Viny said Miss Ellice said good-by very friendly, and went on down mountain. James Curdy wanted to set a hound of Harris's on her track, and the drunk ones shouted at that, and one staggered out to get the dawg. But Jonathan, he represented that Miss Ellice would be 'most down mountain now and out on big road where the tracks would be all mixed up and covered, and anyhow the folk down there wouldn't understand and let it be done. By that time the cabin was burning up on mountain above them. They could see the smoke and light. James Curdy had to let it be, though doubtless he had some hard thoughts of the Almighty. Well, that is the end of it! She didn't ever come back. It ain't much of a story. I don't know why I told it to you."

"You don't know where she went?"

"No. Mountain folk ain't curious in them ways. You'd better have let me sing to you about John Horn. Lucinda says she took her body away, but not her spirit. Says she can feel her any still and sunny day. I reckon Jonathan Morgan feels the same way. I don't know.

It's been a long time ago! Brother Carraway's dead and Jonathan Morgan is Brother Morgan now and preaches in the old church. Things air sure changing in this world! Last summer I heard him say myself that Christ was inside us and not outside—might never have been outside us, so much in the world being parable! James Curdy's so old now he couldn't do anything but look mad as an old beast in winter and get right up and go out of church, looking like a snow cloud and talking to himself. . . . Lucinda says people keep on acting and persuading if we see them or if we don't see them!"

He lifted himself, long, lank, and brown, and moved from the hemlock. "You air welcome—Mr. Smith, you'd better speak to Jim Harris about them logs."

XIII

MALCOLM SMITH, talking with Curtin in the cool twilight, before Hall's, had no word against Drew's departure for Sweet Rocket. "He's a valuable, likable fellow! There's a curious sense when you are with him of depth or background that he doesn't understand himself. Violin wood! He says that this friend of yours has something to teach that he wants to learn. That's all right! I can generally tell when a man's real destiny is ruling him. I've got that feeling now about Drew. He needs to buy in a certain city and he's going there. If we're here next year—and there's a lot to do on Rock Mountain—I'll be glad to take him on again."

Bedtime came. Again Curtin slept profoundly, restfully, waked early, and climbed again to crest of mountain to see again the sun rise over so great expanse. He sat in the stone chair and before him hung the morning star and the senescent moon. Below them was spread violet and jonquil and one strange sea of blue.

Again he felt the Spiritual Sun. He thought: "This is what they have perceived at Sweet

Rocket. They have not waited for death. They live now, and forever, and know it. This body will go from them, but they are building or remembering—I do not know which, and perhaps it is both—a life that will not go from them. And I also, also, though I am a babe yet—"

Sitting in the hollow of stone at the top of the upraised wave of earth he watched the sunrise from Rock Mountain. . . . He conceived that what was true of him was true of others, had been true age after age, was true now over this round earth of others. He thought: "There has always been a fellowship. The eidelweiss does not guess the roses and the heliotrope, nor the violet and the meadow rue. But at last the garden of the earth guesses! It becomes the living garden. The living garden becomes the living man. Naught is right, naught is reasonable, until you get it from the whole."

The sun rose, the earth turned ruddy. Curtin went down the path to Hall's, breakfasting there with the men who worked with head and hands. This morning he and Drew would start for Sweet Rocket. Drew's slender luggage was going down mountain to Norwood, whence the train would take it to Alder. Every one liked Drew, even Cooper who laughed at him. "Good luck, old farmer! Ride over and see us sometime!"

The two rode down Rock and crossed a vale, like a green and gold ribbon, and went up Bear

Mountain, where the oaks were all deep colored, and down Bear and over forested hills and on by the trail that struck into the Alder road. They went rather silently, but in a deep, contented companionship. Once Drew spoke. "He said, 'A good present is one in which the past betters its condition.'" When he said "he" there was meant Richard Linden. After this there was silence again, both having struck some road within, where is the network composed of all the roads of the world.

They approached Sweet Rocket. The forest fell away. Before them shone the river, the wheat and orchard land, and the ruddy house with its pillars of mellowed white, and the hills that inclosed. Through part of the day clouds had been driving across the sky. Now they were sinking before the southwest wind, leaving the blue arch. They were variformed, castles and towers, bridges, alps, cities, ships, mythical beasts, giants. Light embraced them in a spray of colors. Crossing to it, for one instant, Curtin saw Sweet Rocket transfigured. All that was strong and fair became a hundredfold stronger, fairer. All that deterred or roughened or overweighted or twisted or weakened vanished in warmth and light. A sheath, or husk, or burr fell away. Interior power rousing itself, he saw the place in its seraph aspect, eternal in the heavens. Drew seemed to share the perception. He said, abruptly, "There is splendor!"

They felt splendor; then it closed, like light withdrawn, warmth screened away. There stood Sweet Rocket in its earthly estate. That is, they thought it its old earthly estate. But by that much it had become endowed and was not the old earthly estate. They had checked their horses. Curtin said, "So it was always in poetry!"

The younger man had a curious gesture. "We gather all the household gear into the long ship, and put forth!"

But Curtin thought, "In the Bible Noah gathers all the lifeseed into the Ark and rides the waters into a new world."

They crossed the river and went up the little glistening beach and by the cedars to the house. Sweet Rocket welcomed them home, the white folk and the colored folk and Tam. They found the household increased by two.

Linden said, "These are my cousins, Robert and Frances Dane, who come for a little while each year to Sweet Rocket."

They were a married pair, a little above forty, perhaps, the mark of the city upon them. They had quick and nervous bodies, thin, lined faces, eyes well apart, burning deep and very steady, lips tending to compression. They seemed tired —about them breathed something of soldiers after a long day's march through hostile elements. This was bivouac, this was rest! At first they were too tired, there was almost re-

sentment. "O God, *how* can you be still and ageless?" This changed, little by little, at Sweet Rocket. The overtension disappeared. They were left taut, collected, wary—workers worthy of praise in a dangerous world.

At the supper table that evening Curtin made out more and more of their life. They had come yesterday, a little before their set time, and Anna Darcy had the start of him in acquaintanceship. Intellectual radicals certainly, members of some group in action, probably of more groups than one, jack of all agitations and master of one. He could hear them speaking, in halls, and under open sky, and he could see the face of the throng to which they spoke. They would be speaking of Soviet Russia, of Guild Socialism, of Employer and Employed and the Course of Labor that did never yet run smooth. There were causes, not so apparently economic, for which also they would work. He heard them speaking for the Suffrage Amendment and likewise for the release of Conscientious Objectors. They belonged here, they belonged there. The one, he was later told, was Associate Editor of a Journal that was making the step from liberalism of the left to communism of the right. The woman was an admirable violinist. He knew that they lived on little and gave much of that little away. They lived where it was possible to live in one big room and three small rooms. They had a son who was doing well at

a school they liked in the country. To look at them was to see how hard they worked, and to look into their eyes was to see the beacon that set them and kept them at work. They also had vision of Oneness.

Though in talking Linden and Marget used in a much less marked degree the terminology used by the newcomers, it seemed to present no difficulties to them. They seemed to understand these guests, as they understood those others who had come to Sweet Rocket this October, to understand and to travel with them. Curtin thought: "They sympathize. It does not occur to them to say, 'Do something else, take another road!'" He thought: "That is their strength. They utterly share."

Frances Dane had brought her violin to Sweet Rocket. Yesterday it had been laid in the parlor. Now, after supper, sitting by the fire in the old room, the violin spoke. It told of the player's passion for the world, of the man who wrote that music's passion for the world, of the passion for the world of all makers of violins, and of the trees whose wood was used, of the passion for the world that is progression and revolution, of the passion for the world that is the slower rate that is called withstanding progression and revolution, of the passion for the world that is music, of the passion for the world yesterday, to-day, and forever, of the passion for the world that every heart of us knows!

XIV

"IT is something like this," said Linden. "We are One Being with its mighty potencies. All that comes in comes to us, all that goes forth goes from us. The points that take, ponder, sort, combine, alter to better liking; the mighty poles, the mighty afferent and efferent that flow from pole to pole, all that is movement, that is gravitation, that is cohesion, that is justice, that is harmony, that is love, are Ours. We go as we have gone through time, from and toward —the from that is also toward, the toward that is also from. But something beyond Time as we have known it, beyond Space and Causation as we have known them, increases upon us. Consciousness in some sort of the whole orb, awareness through and through, is momentously upon us to-day. In the end all desire is desire for that."

"We shall move then in four-space?"

"If you choose to put it so. It is an allowable figure. All that present language can devise is but a word, a figure, a symbol. What we mean is the next advance in consciousness. When you have it you know it."

They were treading a slender path through October fields. Now they were in a great, climbing cornfield, all stacked corn like brown wigwams, and here and there upon the brown and stubbly earth the orange of pumpkins. The air folded them in violet and gold dust and faint frankincense. The hills had changed in color, so many leaves being shaken down. On days like this the mountains were evidently entranced. It was Indian summer before the Indian summer time. "A new consciousness?" said Frances Dane, walking with Curtin. "A farther-on consciousness? It is in the air to-day!"

"Yes."

"Wise men saying, 'We have seen His star in the east—' Oh, that's a figure!"

"There is some Reality, or thousands of us would not be hearkening, as we are hearkening. . . . A new man, a new creature. . . . It's a consummation devoutly to be desired!"

The heaped corn stood around, the orange globes made constellations on the earth. They were now well up the slope, at their feet Sweet Rocket and the little sliding river. All was reflected, all was veiled, but now and again eyes looked through the veil. Reaching the top of the hill they found there a tall, solitary tree—a black gum—and built around it a bench. It linked in Curtin's mind with the sycamore before the overseer's house.

They sat upon the bench and upon the ring

of brown grass that ran around the tree. The view was fair and they rested in silence. It was Anna Darcy who noticed how much silence there was at Sweet Rocket—silence that sang, that caressed. Moments went by, silence held them, fair solitude, sense of one person here alone. Tam moved, coming nearer to Linden. The latter's hand dropped to Tam's head. Anna Darcy heard a low sigh of relief and burden lifted. It came, she thought, from Frances Dane, who sat near her upon the grass. But it might have come from more than Frances, from all.

Stillness and silence deepened. There grew a cathedral sense, a desert, an ocean sense. Into that entered a wealth of light and strength. A vast wave of freedom, an access of life, lifted them. They had life and they had it more abundantly. They seemed to themselves to flash together, and of them all was made a god. For an instant there held an intense vision of this valley and of Sweet Rocket transfigured. Color and sound lived, every movement was of joy. That broke away, vanished like the image of a rose into the image of a garden of ten thousand. Then that was gone into an image of all the earth, and then that into intense, sheer, mighty Living, with small regard to old space and time, abounding, keen, a Reality leaving old reality behind.

"When it is all done, when it is all known, all felt, when we are fully, completely ourself, when

we remember our Godhood and live it, when we do not look through storm for the lighthouse ray because we are Light, when we do not cry Father and Son because we are both and know it, when there is glory of home, glory of health, glory of love—"

Who had spoken they did not know; it seemed their common voice. Perhaps it was Linden, but if so he spoke as their common voice. Into it came not only the voice of the seven there, but the voice of old Mr. Morrowcombe and the Carters, and of Mrs. Cliff and Mimy and Zinia and Mancy and the others; not just the voice of Sweet Rocket, but the voice of Alder, and of many an Alder, big and little, the voice of the city and the country, the land and the sea. "To be well! Oh, rise within me, truest Self, with healing in thy wings!"

The great, golden feeling passed, leaving echoes, leaving memory. These folk were separate again where they had been one, but not so separate. In and out hovered that breath of transfiguration, a day of spring in late winter, dying, but with a tongue to tell of a time when it would not die. Where all had been vivid, singing, laughing, now was the wonted gentleness of this valley, a dreaminess shot with gold, taking and giving, but doing it subtly, silently, only now and then bestowing evidence of a vast interpenetrative life, showing like the eyes through the veil of this Indian summer day.

They went down through the corn and out by a gate, set in the gray and lichened rail fence, where grew sumac and farewell-summer and the feathery traveler's-joy. They walked in meadows by the river, and at last through the orchard, and so to the house. Mimy, in the kitchen, was singing:

"Oh, Jesus tell you once befo',
Babylon's fallin' to rise no mo'.
Oh, go in peace and sin no mo',
Babylon's fallin' to rise no mo'!"

In the evening Frances played again to them, and the rich and sweet music filled the old room. The violin put by, they talked by the fire; then Linden said, "Read for a little while, Marget." She took up a volume of Blake, and read. "Read that letter to Butts." She read:

". . . Over sea, over land
My eyes did expand
Into regions of fire,
Remote from desire;
The light of the morning
Heaven's mountains adorning;
In particles bright,
The jewels of light
Distinct shone and clear.
Amazed and in fear
I each particle gazed,
Astonished, amazed;
For each was a Man
Human formed. Swift I ran,
For they beckoned to me,
Remote by the sea,

Saying: 'Each grain of sand,
Every stone on the land,
Each rock and each hill,
Each fountain and rill,
Each herb and each tree,
Mountain, hill, earth and sea,
Cloud, meteor and star,
Are men seen afar.' . . .
My eyes, more and more,
Like a sea without shore,
Continue expanding,
The heavens commanding;
Till the jewels of light,
Heavenly men beaming bright,
Appeared as One Man,
Who complacent began
My limbs to enfold
In his beams of bright gold;
Like dross purged away
All my mire and clay.
Soft consumed in delight,
In his bosom sun bright
I remained. Soft He smiled.
And I heard his voice mild,
Saying: 'This is my fold,
O thou ram horned with gold,
Who awakest from sleep
On the sides of the deep.' . . ."

XV

"ENERGY in larger units, affinities gathering strength and flowing together with power!" said Curtin. "Everyone has seen it and felt it in some wise. When it is blamable, unguided, 'mob spirit'! When it is praised, '*esprit de corps*, mass heroism, mass enthusiasm, conflagration of genius, voice of the people, unity of spirit,' what not! Most folk have a glimpse of the fact that there is an ocean of desire, emotion, will, as well as rivers and rivulets."

Marget came and sat with them on the steps of the little summer-house in the flower garden. She wore a great check apron, denoting housekeeping and helping Zinia. She sat down beside them. "What have you been doing, Marget?"

"Once a week Zinia and I have a general straightening day. Then my mother and I have been visiting together."

"Truly, truly, Marget?"

"Truly. But in a little wider order, my dear, a little wider order! The order above this order —into which this will melt. Mother and father, and Will and Edgar."

"Two of those are living and two are dead."

Marget smiled. "Ask Wordsworth!"

"I see," said Anna Darcy.

"Very well. Do more than that. *Touch!*"

With a trail of ivy in her hand she looked past the snapdragon and marigold and larkspur, still blooming, so rich and mild had been this autumn. "Then, as the rooms grew clean, I was with my mother in her birthplace, two hundred miles from here. We were there as adults, moving, loving, understanding with a grown mind, but there in her childhood and girlhood as well, loving to contemplate all the past that was us two! Mine as hers, hers as mine. Mind and feeling ran and caught up with her brothers and sisters, her parents and friends. Her parents remembered their parents and those remembered theirs. Home rose after home, garden after garden, loved place after loved place." Her eyes were upon Drew, whose eyes were upon her. "Do you not see that you can, that you will, recover it all? All that you have been, and you have been very much; all that you are, and you are very much!"

Mimy's singing floated to them from the kitchen:

> "There's a great camp meeting in the Promised Land,
> Oh, pat yo' foot, chillun, don't you get weary!
> There's a great camp meeting in the Promised Land."

"And then," said Marget, "I was in Rome with Richard. The sun shone, the wind was in

cypress and pine, the fountains made liquid sound. Father Tiber glided, Saint Peter's stood. We went to the Sistine Chapel, and then it was the Capitol within and without, and then the Appian Way and all the Campagna—all Rome—not to-day alone, but *all* Rome. And then not Rome, but starlight nights from the decks of ships. And then—"

"This was actuality, while your hands swept and dusted the parlor there?"

"My body was in its duty and happy there. Yes. Actuality, but of another order, an order we are coming into. The order of intensified, guided, *realized* memory and imagination."

"And of reason?"

"And of reason. Profoundly so. It is reason that is guiding. Reason has its higher levels, grows comprehensive, knows longer sequences, completer syntheses. And from the decks of ships we were in the desert watching the stars, shepherds on the hills and shepherds on the plains, shepherds and villagers and wanderers of far days!" She lifted hand and arm in a curious and commanding gesture. "Watching the skies above Queen Rain and King Wind! In desert and plain and upon hills and on seas, thousands and thousands of us strewn in time!"

For an appreciable moment, to some degree, those listening to her became aware of, made, as it were, junction with their own far wandering, far wondering, savage and barbarian self. It

was evident that Drew made junction. They touched the mind struggling there, and the lifted gaze. The sense was one of enormous, calm pervasion. They entered into, they aided, their own early man, where he marked the heavens, and around them was the wistfulness of early lands.

Marget spoke on. "Then while I worked we were building pyramids and mountains of the god. We were watching and watching, patterning and naming, comparing, all the skies, the moon, and the planets and the times of the sun, and the white path through the heavens and the great named princes—everywhere, swarthy folk and pale folk! Now we were many and many. Then in us rose the Devoted, the Searchers of the skies, seeking from city roofs and temple roofs knowledge of the Whole for the Whole."

Their interior self opened its wings and used its eyes. As space expanded, so did time. They were there in the October sunshine, on the summer-house steps, but likewise they attended, and in some vast, liberated way they were that collective effort, that process. They might carry the method over into all processes. There swam across the mind other words—"commerce"—"government"—"family"—many and many a word.

Marget's voice went on. "Now one has made a telescope. Our theories change; we stand on dead theories and study on. Thousands of us

studying, thousands building knowledge, learning vision! We gaze, we watch, we turn to desks and write and figure, we reason, we divine, we better our instruments, we gather results and make fortunate guesses, we hearken to intuition. We stand on a mossy stone in space and study the Promised Land, the universe that is ours, the ever perpetuating, the ever bettering! Time widens. Here are mountain summits and the observatories of this day, and the clockwork and the pierced dome, and the great eye that we have made, and the photograph. Mind sits at the knee of Great Mind and learns its alphabet. And all the thousands that were and are and will be are one Astronomer, and it is I, still working to know!" She ceased to speak, and sat wrapped in the golden light.

Said Robert Dane: "We follow where you step. You make us follow you."

"I do not make you. You walk with me because you can walk. We walk. It is your Self as it is mine."

"We move and we feel, then, where you are. You live there more fully and keenly than we, but we can breathe and feel and see. Go on! We would have your life, as you have ours."

"Then, after the stars, while I wound the clocks, I walked into the minute. Again thousands of us working and watching, noting, divining—thousands and thousands, years past and to-day and to-morrow! And one devises

the microscope. All the laboratories! . . . Into the cell, into the atom, the infinite dance of relativities and small collections! And the intensed, pointed endeavor, using perception as fine as the millionth part of a hair—we knowing, marking, understanding ourself there, where we are moving clouds! We working there, patient, patient, the god working! The great and the small. We who forever remember and make richer ourself. We the I— And then I was again with my dead, who are just as much and just as little dead as I myself! And then I came out into the garden."

They sat on the summer-house steps, and the marigolds glowed around them. She spoke again. "Here and there, throughout the past, and often now I think in our own day, a man or woman lays hold upon faculties that some day all will lay hold upon. *And greater things than these.* Forerunners, pioneers! Regard this late flood of books describing communion with the dead and giving detail of the life hereafter. What they describe is the widening consciousness here and now! The increasing awareness. One does not wait for death. Richard and I would not have you think that we are deep, deep, deep in that realm. Were it so nothing could hide it. Were we or any full in the next order you would see the shining. We are not there, but we are in motion toward it, as are many to-day. The road thitherward has its

great scenery and long, thrilling adventure! And you, too, all of you, too, are in motion toward it. In this day of ours, each day of the sun, more and more are in motion."

She rose from the step. "I have rested this body that we call Marget Land and now I shall put it again to work in the house we call Sweet Rocket."

XVI

THAT evening, after she had played to them, Frances fell to telling of a crippled boy, almost a man, living in a poor flat in New York, the father an overworked head clerk, the mother a strong, gadabout, well-meaning person, more apt to reproach than to sustain. There was a sister, a stenographer, who meant to marry, if she could, some employer. This nineteen-year-old boy had a passion for travel, who could rarely travel as far as the street. At intervals, when his father had leisure to accompany him, he went to a movie. If the piece had scenery, country and ocean and strange cities, moving throngs and great buildings and places of which he had read, he was happy. He took the *Geographic*, and got travel books from a library. He knew more of the earth's surface than did many a "traveled" person. But it was hot in the city, in his little stuffy room, or it was cold in the city in houses that could never buy coal in quantity. He had a good deal of pain, and his eyes got bigger and bigger.

Curtin had claimed the small bedroom at the end of the upper hall. Drew slept in the dormer-

windowed room above. Frances and Robert Dane possessed the large room opposite Marget's, next to Linden's. Here were four windows and each narrow bed placed where it might look forth. This night the Danes talked awhile, then addressed themselves to sleep. Robert slept, but Frances found that she was wakeful. Yet she had definitely turned from care and question of the day, from concern for her own work left in suspension, even from the face and incident of Sweet Rocket. From her pillow she saw the stars as they rimmed and rose above the mountains. At first she seemed to be over there, with the shadow below and the diamond above, but then to herself she left it all. There seemed naught about her but cool space. She lay without fret at wakefulness, though she was intensely awake.

She became aware that, waking, she was becoming rested, refreshed, as though she had profoundly slept. She was awake above the old waking. The old waking was dreaminess to this state. Vigor poured into her being, and all the past was passed. That is, it was passed in its heaviness and friction, its strain and anxiety. All that seemed to drop away, like dross leaving gold. It was curious, her sense of gold color of all things in a gold light of their own, not from without. She became distinctly aware of influences. They were good. She acquiesced, "Yes, I will travel with you." Will consenting,

her strength was added to those other strengths. In the plane where she now was flashed out co-operation.

Marget—Richard! Certainly they were where she had been wont to call "within her." But certainly she felt them, was aware of them, presently saw them, as never had she done before in that "within," though often in memory, thought, and imagination she, like others, had been with Marget and Richard there "within." She had used those words as a matter of course. Even then that "within" had, when you examined it, its own space and time, its own mechanics, warmth, color, and sound. That "within" and this "within" were of a piece, but where that had been faintly real this was vividly real. She had no doubt of its reality. It was so, but reality of another, of a farther on, order. Marget that afternoon had talked of another order. It seemed that one might rise or deepen into it. She was consciously there now, though in the order below it she rested at Sweet Rocket. It was not the plane of tremendous power and illumination, but it was a state of developed powers. It was as far as just then she could go.

The boy Stuart—Stuart Black. How many a time had she wished that she could give this boy travel! "If I might take him and let him see!" As he had longed, as he had imagined himself traveling with Mr. and Mrs. Dane. "If I could travel with you!" And now to-night

they had somehow caught and held to the ether and were seeing what they wished to see. The influence, the individuality that was Marget and Richard strongly aided.

She was in Rome with Marget and Richard and Stuart Black. She did not question them nor him, and the boy did not question. They were there, and it was sunny weather, and they were strong and happy. They stayed in no hotel, they depended on no cab nor car, they needed no food of the old sort. When they looked at one another they saw body, since where is still multiplicity must still be body. There was something of old bodies in these bodies, but also there was difference, and all to the good. Old defect had vanished. Stuart Black was no cripple; she herself had lost fatigue. There was translucence, a golden appearance, and where they wished to go they were. She wished for Robert, and immediately felt that in wishing she had said to the others, "I wish." They strengthened her wish with theirs. Here, then, was Robert with them, though intermittently, not on the whole so strongly, but coming as he could answer, sleeping there at Sweet Rocket. And now and then another joined them, though somewhat dimly, and that was the boy's father, whom he loved and wished to include in his joy.

The body of Rome, too, was like and not like the old body of Rome. Rome had a Self to

match this Self of theirs. Spirit and body and mind and soul, Rome understood itself better. There rose a Rome richer, purer; nothing of fair and wonderful lost, all such quality strengthened; the unfair, unwise, unstrong of old, everywhere tending to drop the prefix. Yet to the new self Rome was herself, singing, enchanted, of the past and present and future.

Marget and Richard, who seemed truly Marget-and-Richard, one word, had said, "a week in Rome," and that was what seemed to pass. They saw as in old travel they had seen, they went about as in old travel they had gone about, they enjoyed as in old times they had enjoyed, but with freedom and power and joy that left the old behind. All was vigor, heightened and transfiguring perception, and yet friendly, homelike, not solemn nor stilted, the boy here enjoying like a boy. Frances became aware of a control, keeping experience to a vivid and fair finiteness, not sacrificing current form. That was for the boy's sake, perhaps for her and Robert also.

And after Rome, Athens—an Athens, too, sublimed. And after Athens, for the splendid richness of things and for the boy, the vast North, forest and plain, and an intense exhilaration of life that swept out upon the great sea and encircled the earth. They spent long, bright days in ships and at ports of call. Then they went to China, and India, and Egypt. They

crossed the desert of Sahara, and again in a great ship passed between the Pillars of Hercules. Followed ocean days, and that greater will and awareness slowly diminishing, gently returning upon its still habitual self. Diminishing, diminishing, slower, slower, a little melancholy, but tranquil, with a subtle smile.... A sense of a giant woman in stone rising from an islet in a harbor—a sense of a familiar city in the year 1920—a sense of dreamy farewells, a quiet darkness and lapse....

Frances turned herself in her bed at Sweet Rocket. Starlight flooding the room dimly revealed walls and furniture. Across by the other window Robert lay sleeping. How much time had passed, or how little, or how widely could you live in no time at all? Here was reality, but there, too, had been reality! It had been real, that companionship and that travel. The memory of it was memory of reality. Mind had attended there not less, but more than here. The whole compound self had achieved a unity and power. Achievement—ungrown wings—first flights! She thought: "The possibilities! O life of life, our possibilities!" Old warmth and drowsiness took her. There was a kindly fatigue, as though she had walked on a bright day to mountain top and back and now thrown herself down for rest. She saw the stars through half-open eyes, then slept.

The sun was streaming in when she waked;

Robert already up and dressing. She raised herself upon her arm. "Good morning!"

"Good morning!"

She rubbed her eyes. "There is a strange and happy feeling of 'there' being here!"

Robert said: "That somehow hits it. I had the most vivid dream of long, sunny travel, with you and Marget and Richard and Stuart Black! It wasn't like a dream. I feel as if I were just off the ship—had all the memories and a most tremendous refreshment! I could take down any wall this morning!"

"Why do you put it that way?"

"I don't know. We have so walled ourselves in from wide doing—are so afraid of our own landscape!" He stood by the window. "I think I'll ask you a question that never, never would occur to Mr. Gradgrind to ask! Do you remember it, too? For instance, Athens and some dim, northern forest—and a lot of islands with palms? Do you remember music?"

"Oh, it was all music—and I think that I'll play it all my life!"

Dressed, they went down to the others, Zinia's bell ringing for coffee, omelet, honey, and cakes. Linden and Drew had eaten and gone to meet Roger Carter and William where the winter wood was being cut. Marget sat behind the coffee urn. "Good morning, Robert and Frances!" Her face of a subtle, moving beauty, more of look than of feature, did not turn upon

them with a "Do you remember?" It seemed to assume that they remembered. Frances thought, "Certainly she remembers, and as much more strongly than I as I remember more strongly than Robert!" It was of a piece with all that they had talked of. "At last, with all of us, talk passes to action." Frances Dane drank her coffee. All of them in the room seemed bound in a ribbon, Linden and Drew also, wherever they might be in the forest, and Stuart Black in that small, dark room in New York, and how many others! She did not name them, but she knew they were many, in fact all. In a flash she saw how, to Marget and Richard, might appear not many selves and binding ribbon, but One Self. To realize this was to realize that for her, also, there was but One Self.

XVII

THREE days after this Curtin and Anna Darcy, who often walked together, having gone to the pass of hemlock, cliff and tumbling water, turned in the broken sunlight and shadow back to Sweet Rocket. The maples of the upper slopes had cast almost all their leaves, but the oaks stood yet in carmine. Yesterday had fallen light rain. Earth lay moist, and soil and leaf and fern and moss sent out a haunting odor. The sun stood in Scorpio. The drama of the year was on the homeward road. It saw ahead the Archer and the Goat and the Water Bearer, the Fishes of the great deep, and the Ram that, springing forth, should take once more the road, the old road, the new road, the old-and-new road!

Now Curtin and Anna Darcy spoke, and now they were silent. It was a blessed feature of this valley that none need be talkative in order to convey, "I am at home with you."

Her visit was approaching its end. That was what people would say. "Physical presence and metaphysical presence!" said Curtin, answering her thought. "Physical and above-physical—

and the generations to come will find the inclusive word."

"Oh, I shall be here still—or 'here' will be with me in the city—or it will be both. At any rate, no desolate parting!"

They passed from under hemlock and gray rock to beech trees and a dappled path. The small river calmed itself and began to flow through cultivated land. Gentian and farewell-summer made a purple fringe for the way.

"In old romances one walked into an inn or house by the road—always saying, 'It is by the road that goes on as it went before, and I presently again with it!' But never again as it was before, and never again I as before! For just there befalls the adventure that sets one climbing to a new road."

Sweet Rocket vale opened before them. Each time they looked it grew fairer, and that, they had begun to see, was because it was not separated from anything.

Said Anna Darcy, presently: "Do you know Morris's *Earthly Paradise?* Do you remember the Story of Rhodope? I used to know almost all of it by heart. When Rhodope is born the countryman, her father, dreams, and he seems to himself to be standing with the mother, watching

". . . a little blossom fair to see."

Then:—

"The day seemed changed to cloudiness and rain,
And the sweet flower, whereof they were so fain,
Was grown a goodly sapling, and they gazed
Wondering thereat, but loved it nothing less.
But as they looked, a bright flame round it blazed,
And hid it for a space, and weariness
The souls of both the good folk did oppress,
And on the earth they lay down side by side,
And unto them it was as they had died.

"Yet did they know that o'er them hung the tree
Grown mighty, thick-leaved, on each bough did hang
Crown, sword or ship, or temple fair to see;
And therewithal a great wind through it sang,
And trumpet blast there was; and armor rang
Amid that leafy world, and now and then
Strange songs were sung in tongues of outland men.

"It is something like that that I feel for any place—and perhaps now it will be so for this and every place! It was such a blossom and now it is such a tree. All hangs therein, peoples and nations, things past and things to come! When I go away I shall find it so in any place."

"That is what you will do—and I also. Everywhere that Tree, that Man, that God!"

The vale widened at the overseer's house. The sycamore by the river stretched in the sun its great arms of white and brown, and these and the blue vault made a pattern. A dozen turkeys crossed the path in a stately, slow-stepping procession. Mary Carter was singing in the house, and little Roger singing after her. As they approached the tree and the bench

around it other voices reached them; then one voice reading aloud. They saw the two Danes seated there—Frances, reading a letter. "So I *did* travel with you and Mr. Dane. It was so wonderful—it is all around me now! I don't clearly remember little, sharp bits of it, but I remember the whole. It has shown me a lot of things. I don't any longer mind living. It's funny, but father, too—"

Frances looked up as Curtin and Anna stepped under the tree. Bright tears stood in her eyes. She shook them away and smiled at the two. "It's a letter from the crippled boy I told you about—"

The four walked back to Sweet Rocket House. "Robert and I have but a week longer. But this place tempers the wind of the whole year. It drops honey into winter days."

Curtin asked Robert Dane, "Forth from here you go on with the work you are doing?"

"Of course. That is a department of this. But I wish to work without bitterness or violence."

The day shone about them. Rain of the night had brought into late autumn a sense of spring. Spring and autumn seemed to touch across shortened winter. The air held a divine, sweet freshness. They were aware of new life, and all objects of perception tossed back vigor and luster.

"The world renews—the world renews!" sang the river.

A little later Robert and Frances Dane at their window saw, coming up from the river, a somewhat worn automobile. Stopping before the porch the driver and owner descended and mounted the steps. "There's an old type!" said Robert. "Tall and thin, black clothes and soft hat, low collar and string tie, white hair, mustache and imperial—look, Frances, it's a picture! Once it was the horse, and he swung himself down—then the carriage, and at the door he helped out the ladies. Now it's the car. To-morrow he will descend from the airship—just like that!"

She looked over his shoulder. "It's old Major Hereward from Oakwood. He was here four years ago, that time I came alone. He's all the past! But that car's symbolic, too. He's all the past beginning to say, 'For all my fighting I begin to find myself, with all I care for, here in the present—perhaps also in the future!' He's beginning to think that it may be so with the airship. There with all that he really, really cares for! 'I always said that they couldn't get along without me, and now I begin to see that neither can I get along without them!'"

Major Hereward appeared at the dinner table. It seemed that he, too, was a cousin of Linden's, on the other side from the Danes. His place was Oakwood, twenty miles away. Old Major Linden and he had been boyhood friends. He breathed knowledge of Sweet Rocket in ancient

days. His manner to Marget was delightful, though perhaps he still held in comparison, in a "this—that," Sweet Rocket House and the overseer's house. His manner to all was delightful—like old wine.

Robert Dane pondered that, and also Frances's words of the morning. Like others, he could speak as though the past, the present, and the future were islands with nothingness between. But truly he knew it was not so, and he assumed that much self-knowledge in those to whom he spoke. Now he had it, in a flash of vision, how the old wine and wheat, how the old strength of man and woman, did go on. All within the whole flashed and changed. But the whole held all. The tangential itself only went so far, then returned, and was met and welcomed. *The prodigal son.* He saw that contrary winds were not so contrary after all. "In the whole, and in the whole only, I am not contrary to him nor he to me. In the end one sail and one wind—and the sail due to arrive and the wind favorable."

That afternoon Major Hereward walked over the place; with him, Linden and Curtin. "I came to talk to you about something, Richard. But we'll leave it till night. I can always pull things together better then—after the day. Here's the oak Phil Linden and I planted the day we heard of First Manassas! He was eighteen and I was sixteen. The next year we both went in."

They stood beneath the tree. Said Curtin, "Much water has gone over the wheel since then!"

Major Hereward nodded. "Much! But Phil Linden and I seem to stand here together. Not just of the mind we were, but together! *And many a foe grew to be a friend.*"

The bright day declined. The sun set in a coral sea, a crescent moon appeared, earth grew an amethyst, the stars came out. Brush was being burned and wood smoke clung in the air, and there was the multitudinous chirping, chirping in grass and bush of late autumn. It was almost November, and they built larger fires. The old parlor gleamed.

"It's a dear room, a dear, dear room!" said Major Hereward. "I don't believe any here can love these portraits as I do. Richard may look at them often, but—" He broke off. "I forgot that he is blind! I'm always forgetting it! Well, he may see the reality of them."

Richard entered, and a moment later Marget. "It's a night of the gods! How the fire leaps!"

They sat around it, Anna Darcy and Curtin and Drew and the two Danes and Major Hereward, Linden and Marget. Anna Darcy was saying: "I went down to Mimy's before supper. The preacher is there for the night—Brother Robinson."

Linden answered her. "Yes. He will be here

presently. He always comes to us for an hour or so. He's a fine fellow."

Rising, he fetched Frances's violin. "What deep and dear pleasure you give, Frances!"

She played old music and new, into which the old glided, until there seemed neither old nor new, but a content very vast and rich. The wing of the music lifted them; music and flame blended. They sat in reverie, and the wealth of the world flowed, circularly flowed.

Without, in the night, a lantern passed the windows. "There is Brother Robinson," said Marget. Richard went out—they heard his voice in the hall—then he returned with the negro preacher and Zinia. He said, "Mr. Robinson—friends, all of us!" The circle widened. the preacher sat down between Linden and Robert Dane, and Zinia sat between Marget and Frances. "Play a little longer, Frances!"

The music blended with the flame, the wealth of the world flowed, flowed, circularly flowed. The Rev. William Robinson sat, a gaunt, dark figure, in long-preserved broadcloth, with a rugged, deep brown face. When he spoke his voice had unction—like the voices of most of his people—unction, but not too much of it. By sheer indomitableness he had gained a fair education, and he was a good man and a wise one. In her blue dress Zinia sat beside Marget Land. She kept silence, but her poise was like her poise in the dining room and pantry, or on the porch

when Miss Darcy had taken her breakfasts there. The latter always thought of her standing beside the pillar, or in the clean, airy pantry, by the jar of flowers and the open *Pilgrim's Progress*, always heard her rich voice, saying, "I like that girl Mercy!"

It seemed that Robert Dane had met Brother Robinson before this at Sweet Rocket. When the violin was put by the two talked together a little, as folk might talk who liked each other. Curtin, from his corner, watched with interest Sweet Rocket in Virginia. A voice from somewhere went through his head: *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all.* He looked at Major Hereward, and the old man, who had stiffened at the "Mr. Robinson" and the seating in the circle about the fire, seemed now to rest at ease, in a brown study, as one who regards the expanse of things.

Miss Darcy spoke. "At Mimy's this afternoon you had begun to tell me of the building of your church and schoolhouse down the river. Then they called me and I had to go—"

"Tell them now, brother," said Linden.

Brother Robinson told, and what he told had humor and pathos and heroism. There passed, as upon a screen, the littles gathered that were much to spare, quaint efforts at money raising, labor at twilight and dawn given by laboring

men, the women's extra work and their festivals. Brother Robinson was a born raconteur. Into the sheaf of his homely narrative fell vast swaths of human effort and aspiration. "And Brother Linden helped us, and old Mr. Morrowcombe gave us five dollars."

A voice came from the corner of the hearth, from Major Hereward: "I'd like to help you, too, Brother Robinson! Put me down for ten dollars."

They left the material building of the schoolhouse and the church. Said Brother Robinson: "I've got something else I want to tell you. I've had an Experience, and it's taken the heart out of my bosom and crumbled it between its fingers and put in a new one! I came to Sweet Rocket to tell it to you, Mr. Linden. But I don't see anyone here that I'd be afraid to tell it to."

"There isn't any such," said Linden. "Tell it!"

XVIII

"I WAS going to preach," said Brother Robinson, "at Piny Hill Church, that's twelve miles from Old Lock, where I live. I started out Saturday afternoon to walk, counting on a lift or two on the road, and I got them. I was going to sleep at Will Jones's, who works at the mill on Piny Creek. The first lift I got was from a wagon full of hay going to Cherry Farm. That was two miles. Then I walked three miles. Then a Ford came along and said, 'Hey, Brother Robinson, are you going as far as Llewellyn?' I said that I was, and farther, and the Ford took me to Llewellyn. That didn't leave but four miles to do, and that was nothing. So I was a-walking, and the leaves hung red and yellow, and the evening was powerful sweet! I went through the woods by the Thessaly place. I was thinking as I was walking. And then, just like that, Mr. Linden, thinking with words stopped! My old body stopped, too. I just lowered it under a cedar tree and left it there.

"But I myself went higher and wider. I was everywhere and all over! I was in and through

everything! They were just shapes in me. It was like being air, or like that inside air you told me about, called ether. You told me about that, but when you told it I hadn't experienced, and so it was just words. Now I have experienced. Everything was right here and now, or there and then, it didn't matter a mite which!

"The first thing I felt was just infinite cleanness and coolness. It was me and it was not me. If it was me it was something vast in me that had got the upper hand. There was a me, a self, like a tired, dirty child. To that me the other was God. But God turning out to be me, too. I had preached about God for thirty years, but I never really tasted or touched God till that day. It was cool and whole and pure, and bigger than the sky. And it forgave all my sins, or it saw clean through them. It saw a long way and all at once. . . . The tired and dirty me was everybody else, too. It was me and it was everybody, and we were healed by our God, and that was us, too, us, and more than we had ever dreamed of in that us! It healed with its might, and the lower part understood and went up. . . . I can't give you a description. It was awe and joy. The little body of William Robinson couldn't have held it, but something bigger than that held it. And then, just as light changes on the mountains here—when you are on top of Rock Mountain maybe, and see everything below you —and it's all there, but it's got another tone and

you feel it in a different way—just so that cool awe and greatness changed a little. It was joy still, but now it was friendly and natural. It was the whole earth looking like a garden, and all mine, all me, and in that me was all I had ever thought was you or him or her, and all that I had ever said was it. The bird and the beast were there, the trees and the grass and the air. And it was lovely; it was just love, and beauty!" He brushed his hand across his eyes. "I can't tell you about that beauty. And we weren't dead; all was living. If you'll think of the very best moment you ever had, when you were deepest friends with yourself and found that it took in everybody, it might be something like that a million times over. It was innocent and wise. And all the times that I'd ever thought I was happy were just plain misery beside it! I couldn't hold it, any more than a young robin can hold the flight he will hold after a while. I reckon we're all fledglings! Back I flopped toward William Robinson. Here was old Virginia, and the woods and the road and the hills and the mountains, and Old Lock, and Piny Hill Church. But just before I settled in I got for just a minute this very country and our daily life in the light and the glow and the music and the wonder! All that was fair kept in and strengthened, and all that was unfair just melted out! I knew then that though we talk about it we haven't begun to love our

country. It went, too, into the world. 'For God so loved the world.' . . . Well, that vanished, too. I was back. I was just the colored preacher, William Robinson. I was back, but I could remember! I've touched what it's like to be God."

He ceased speaking, and sat bent toward the fire. A little of that luminousness of which he had told seemed to show through his flesh, a dark translucence. He said, under his breath, "'Little children, love one another!'" and rested silent, in communion with the flame.

"'For all we are members one of another.' Feeling that," said Linden, "is to feel as One. Then the One no longer counts as separate his members. He says I AM."

Stillness held in the old room. The fire gave it crimson and amber life and warmth. The canvases on the walls, the pictured men and women, seemed self-luminous. Major Hereward spoke abruptly: "Where are the dead? Where are my brother Dick, my son Walter, my mother and father?"

"They are here. Re-member yourself and you shall find them."

"Where is heaven?"

"It is here, the moment you begin to perceive it."

"You mean that you perceive the dead, Richard?"

"Yes. Do not you?"

The old man stared. He drew a long breath. "Never before did I think that I did!"

Robert Dane spoke. "You mean that as the Great Consciousness expands it becomes aware of itself there, too? That that realm becomes open?"

"Yes. Discovery there is within the grasp of our age. It is not so far away as many might think! As Power comes through. The 'dead' and the 'living' do meet. They have met all the time. The general recognition and use of the fact is to be strengthened, developed."

"It is not the only recognition and use of Oneness impending!"

"By no means! No. In every field there is ripening corn. How should it not be so?"

Major Hereward's voice came in again. "'The spiritual sense of the dead.' I've heard that phrase. I didn't know what it meant. Do you mean that when I seem to myself to move about in company with Dick, when things come into my mind that he knew about or that we did together, when I seem, as I go on, to understand his character better and better, and to see life as he did, when he seems here with me or when we are just happy together in old places—that it's *true?* And Walter and my mother and father and Helen and others—oh, scores of others—they enter my mind and heart just as though they came in at a door! Do you mean that when I think of them suddenly and strongly,

feel them as it were, that *they* are doing part of it, that there *is* intercourse? Good Lord! I thought it was only myself!"

"I mean that," said Linden. "It will grow to be more than that. A higher, fuller thing than that."

The old man rose. Face and voice showed emotion. "I've got what I came for. God bless you, Richard, and God bless you, too, Brother Robinson! Oh, we've been little! Marget, I'll say good night, my dear. Out of my life goes fear and loneliness!"

Brother Robinson likewise, with Zinia, rose to say good night. "I'll see you in the morning," said Richard. "I want to talk to you about the school."

That night Curtin, also, increased his sense of life, life that included those that were said to be dead. There had been no repetition of the hour when, lying in the room where now slept Robert and Frances Dane, he had touched with an inward sense that brother who had fallen from the aeroplane, who had been jostled out of the body, but who lived! Surely the life was not quite that of the old life, though surely built from that; certainly Curtin might not fully understand until he, too, slipped the body. Yet there was life and living. He had not experienced that hour again, and he had tried doubting if he had ever experienced it. But doubt did not prove to be a going proposition.

Memory smiled it down. Yet the experience had not been repeated, or rather what had come had diffused itself in the wide awakening of these Sweet Rocket weeks. Nor did its distinctive *klang* return to-night. There was not the same white keenness. That which beamed about him now was more like that which Marget had spoken of on the summerhouse steps. Not one now, but many of his dead; not the human only, but the flower and the tree, the bird and the beast, the scene, the water, land and sky. "The old and sweet is here, but chosen, redeemed, gathered up, understood, become immortal! And we have had it all the time. It has been here all the time! Just as we had electricity and did not know it."

He fell asleep, rocked by the waves of a sunny sea of love and home and kindred.

XIX

MAJOR LINDEN spent two days at Sweet Rocket, chiefly sitting upon the porch in the sunshine or walking about the place, sometimes in company, sometimes alone, but never, Curtin noticed, with an old man's look of loneliness, though he thought that at times before this Major Hereward would have shown that loneliness. But now there was vigor in him, vigor and interest and life. "If they are here, living for me as I for them, talking to me and I talking to them—it is the strangest thing what life does when it comes!" His laughter had a clear and happy ring. "I had thought of all kinds of solutions! And here it is, the needle threaded, while I was still looking for it in the haystack!" He stood beneath the oak he had planted almost sixty years ago. "Phil is here. Trying, wasn't it, Phil, when I said, 'Oh, fancy!' or, 'It's just Wilmot Hereward talking to himself!'"

When he met Linden on the porch he said: "Richard, if it's so with those folk whom we so promptly insisted hadn't any reality in them, isn't it so all over? When I'm pondering Bob

who's in England, or when I'm thinking of nothing in particular and in he walks into mind and affection—"

"Yes. It is part of the same truth. It all rests on the oneness of Being. That is why you must in some wise grasp that Oneness first. A time will come where there will be no saying 'My brother Dick,' or 'Bob in England,' because they and Wilmot Hereward and all others will have advanced beyond all such divisions. But on the road there you will meet many a fair power!"

The old man went the next morning back to Oakwood in his battered car. He went alone and not alone, with a peaceful face.

In the afternoon Anna and Curtin, Drew and the two Danes, walked down the river, in among the partly forested, partly grassy hills that here closed the valley. Indian summer had now stolen over the land. The air hung smoky amethyst, and still as still! No motion was in the fallen leaves, the birds sailed stilly by, the stubble fields dreamed, the river sang low. Wood smoke clung in the nostril. Turning, coming homeward, the brick house and yellowed pillars stood pictured. They passed through the orchard and by a small cider mill. Zinia, on the back porch, poured for each out of an amber pitcher an amber glassful. "*Washael!*" said Drew, and lifted the glass. Curtin caught from memory the answering phrase,

"*Drink-hael!*" A shaft of wonder, like a gleam of light, touched them all with strange fingers. Something trembled in the air. If it said aught it said, "So Earth begins to *live* Poetry!" Drew set down the cup with a sharp, clear sound. "Life, everlasting life!" he said. "I see it now! We have always lived!"

Again evening in the old parlor, the fire and music, Tam lying beside Linden, Marget seated by Anna Darcy. Robert Dane spoke. "This finding ourselves in all and all in us, this lifting the all into a mighty I, this is it behind the slowly accelerating movements of the ages, behind all efforts for freedom, for knowledge, for interchange and intercourse, swifter and swifter, subtler and subtler intercourse—this is it?"

"Yes. Behind a hundred shapes of dawn."

"Effort does not cease?"

"No. But effort, too, is finer and far more powerful. You act now from within upon the within."

"To touch through and through that we are one! Hercules's labor isn't in it!"

"Yet it is done and to be done. Find me if you can an individual to-day who has not some dim perception of it, or who is not in some wise acting toward it! Even the most unpromising—look and you will see! It is so tremendous, that finding, it runs through every fiber. We can cut out no pattern, but we move from light to light, from love to love!"

In her room that night, when she had put out the lamp, Anna Darcy, lying in bed, watched the firelight on wall and ceiling. A cricket chirped, she could hear the river. Her visit to Sweet Rocket was ending. "Only it will never end; it is immortal within me!"

She saw how all life interlocked, how shock to one was taken up by the whole, how joy to one thrilled through all. "What we call space is Being; what we call time is our own Story, our colored, toned lastingness! Give and take, forever and forever, forever and forever! Find lovely things to give, and from the other side of us take lovely things, lovelier and lovelier! Know thyself—know thyself—know Thyself. 'If ye do it unto one, the least of these, ye do it unto Me.' 'And all we made One.'"

The walls of the room disappeared. Anna Darcy, a slight, worn, teaching woman, sixty years old, vanished or altered. There was wide life, land and sea, deep life that did not talk in births and deaths, lofty life that said, "Better than this wave even, shall you know!"

It was Strength, it was Peace, it was Wisdom and Balm.

Across the hall Robert Dane lay thinking. In his youth he had the passion of a Shelley for a regenerate world. Older, the vision dulled, and yet he worked on doggedly, heroically, one with thousands of others breaking and making a road for the feet of Coming Man. He worked

heroically, never sparing himself, a devoted life. Sometimes the gleam shone fair before him, oftener mists made it faint, sometimes he lost it. Then it shone again. He worked on. Tonight, lying here at Sweet Rocket, his youth came back, but higher, fuller, wiser! He saw what might be done, what was doing. He saw the interrelated roads and the travelers upon them, the hosts of travelers. A vision came to him in the night. His body lay very still, but he himself saw clearly a great thing.

There was a City that was country also, and sea and land and sky, that was a world, harmonious, great, not a dead thing, not unintellectual, but living, living with a vast fervor and beauty and interest and knowledge, throwing out even, it might be, silver lines toward a world yet more light, more fervent, more living! But it was there, all that he could now image of body and spirit, mind and soul's desire:

He saw like a pale film another city that was pale and sorrowful to this. And he saw that city, as it were, send out itself, by rivers and seas and roads, thousands and thousands of paths, upon a journey to the other. There was hardly a point—truly he thought there was not any point—that did not travel. So many living beings, so many ships or rafts, caravans or solitary travelers to that Desired Haven! All going, some ahead, some behind, but all going. The pale and sorrowful city was mov-

ing into that other, and brightening as it moved. That other was drawing it, steadily, steadily! He felt it like a loadstone; he felt it like a mother calling home.

The vision passed, but there was left Assurance. He lay still in the starry night. The mind kept up an underhumming with words like "reintegration," "superconsciousness," but the spirit dealt only with the bliss of a great coming to itself. He slept at last, and his sleep was dreamless and profoundly renewing.

XX

"IT is the flowering land, it is the music land. You go to it through every moment and incident and encounter of the day. You read, and it is behind the words. You think, and it smiles through. It is the Higher Us that resolves the discords and reaps the fields. Experience it once, and it is miracle and wonder; experience it twice, and you say, 'Columbus was not the only discoverer!' Experience it thrice, and you work for it day and night! You yourself, drawing yourself out of the old man and the old house. Read 'The Chambered Nautilus.'"

"It is religion—"

"It always has been Religion."

"And the gloom and storm of our day?"

"It is *not* gloom, it is *not* storm. It is the pains of growth. Feel the epic and voyage that it is! . . . Every proper and general noun in all dictionaries now and to come is my name, as it is yours. Every verb is my doing, as it is yours. The use of language, use and *dis*-use, is mine as it is yours—"

They were walking in the orchard beneath the apple trees, whose leaves were slow to fall.

There had been, this morning, a heavy frost. The garden flowers were going, the creeper over Mimy's house had shed its scarlet leaves, but held its dark-blue berries. The heavens hung a blue crystal. The air had the cool of mountain water.

It was the day when Anna Darcy must leave Sweet Rocket. After dinner Daniel and the phaeton and Marget would take her to Alder to the north-going train. Now, with Marget, she went the round of the place, saying good-by. They had been to Mimy's, and had talked to Mancy at the barn. "Come again!" said Mancy. "But you ain't really going, you know! Sweet Rocket will hold you, and you'll hold Sweet Rocket."

They came by the kitchen. Mimy was singing:

"Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home—"

"You gwine back inter the troubled world?" said Mimy. "They say hit's awful! But, Lord! there ain't any bars ter trouble! I've seen a lot."

They walked up the river to the overseer's house, where they were made welcome by Mary Carter and small Roger, and by old Mr. Morrowcombe, who was staying over from Sunday, which was yesterday. He said, much as Mancy had said: "I'm sorry you are going! But thar! You ain't going in the old, harsh ways."

Marget, sitting beside him on the step of the porch, rested her arm upon his knee. Her brown, slender hand touched his great horny one. "Grandfather Morrowcombe!" she said. He answered her: "I see you as a nine-year-old, Marget, and I see you as a woman in Sweet Rocket Valley, and I see you as something that stands above child and woman. It isn't any more big than it is subtle-fine. It's puzzling to find words. But when I look at you and think of you I seem to hear the air stirring over the whole world. All kinds of things that I had forgotten, and all kinds of things that I have read. . . ."

She and Anna sat for five minutes under the sycamore by the water. Returning then to Sweet Rocket, they walked in the garden that was making ready for winter. As it happened, Mrs. Cliff came this day down mountain to borrow some sugar. She sat on the steps of the back porch, in the violet light of November. "Howdy!" she said to Miss Darcy. "I'm glad you stayed on. When I come here I want to stay on, too. But thar! I take the memory of it up to my home. You wouldn't think how often thar I'm here, too!"

To-day she had a braided rug to sell, and Marget bought it. Mrs. Cliff's long, wrinkled hand put the money in her pocket. "Times isn't betterin' any, Miss Marget."

Marget laughed. "Oh, the poor old times!"

It startled Anna Darcy, too, so joyous and care-free and lilting was the voice. Mrs. Cliff stared at her. The mountain woman's face was not what one would call a cheerful one. Whoever was behind it was caught in a network of fine, anxious lines. Now these held for a perceptible moment, then faded as though the twine were mist. That one immortally youthful and insouciant looked forth as it had looked from Marget. Sun came out over meadow, plain, and hill, and Mrs. Cliff laughed. "I reckon you're right, Miss Marget! You generally are. I reckon we've seen so much that we can afford to take it tranquil—which ain't to say that we're either do-less or keerless!"

She spoke to Anna. "You remember my tellin' you about that feeling I had? I 'ain't had it full again. But I've caught glimpses of it, maybe in the day, maybe in the night. I know the minute when anything like it comes my way. When you've had a feeling like that all your life's set to feeling it again."

But Marget had taken it joyously.

When Mrs. Cliff had said good-by and gone mountainward the two, crossing the pleasant porch, entered the house. They walked from room to room, Anna's consciousness gathering each. "Any time you may feel me here!"

"We shall feel you here all the time."

They stood in the study, against the broad mantelshelf. "At first, when I thought of this

room, I thought, 'Richard Linden's study.' But it is of and for and to both of you."

"Ah yes! To both."

She seemed to give forth light. Anna thought, "Is it only the sun shining on her?"

Later, in her own room, all packing done, dressed for her journey, Anna went and sat beside the window as she had sat the first evening at Sweet Rocket. She still heard Mimy singing, she still saw the garden, though it was dreaming now of spring. "I have been here only a month, but in it I have had years and years."

The quiet room filled with a sunny stillness, an eternal assurance. Again, as on that first evening, the mountains were here and the wind of the sea was here. Love and wisdom and power were here.

The boy Jim brought Daniel and the phaeton to the door below. Marget came for her, and they went down, and through the hall to the porch, to find there Linden and Curtin and Robert and Frances and Drew, and Zinia and Mimy, and Mancy and Tam.

Across the river, at the edge of the wood, Marget checked Daniel so that Anna might look back and see the house again, the house and the trees and the hills, and the holding arms of the mountains. "But you are to come again," said Marget. "Never part, and come again!"

"Yes, oh yes!"

The wheels turned and went on upon the Alder road. They entered the forest, old forest, great trees that sloughed their leaves again and again and again, through centuries past number, sloughed their leaves, sloughed their old bodies, made soil, and stood upon it and builded higher. Behind and in and through every stem and leaf rose the subjective forest, and behind and in and through the whole the ideal, the spiritual forest, the divine forest. Around and onward went the wheels on the leafy road. Anna sat beside Marget. The two spoke little, having now no great need of words. The light came down between bare branches. Far and near branch and blue air made a marvel of lacework. Against this pines and hemlocks stood like pyramids and pillars. Song and twitter of a month ago was not now. "The birds go south—the birds go south!" said Marget. "But there are enough left for winter company. There is a bluebird on yonder bough!"

Round went the wheels, making hardly a sound. The forest hung still, so still. For one moment, to Anna Darcy, it all went away. It was *maya*, illusion, the forest, Indian summer, this day of our Lord, the phaeton and Daniel, Sweet Rocket and Alder and New York, Marget Land and Anna Darcy. What was left was fullness of Being. Did it choose to analyze itself it might be into Power, Wisdom, and Bliss. The revealing flash went as it came, ere one

could say, It lightens! *Maya* again, Marget Land and Anna Darcy, Daniel and the phaeton, the forest, Sweet Rocket and Alder and the train to be met. But each time the sheath thinned and there was left stronger light.

The train came, the friends embraced. Anna Darcy looked from window at Marget and then at Alder, the fields and hills and rivers and mountains. The train roared through a tunnel, and when it emerged the scenery was changed. There were fields and mountains, but not these fields and mountains. "And yet they run into those. There is no impassable wall nor aching gulf. There are the finest gradations—"

Marget and Daniel and the phaeton went homeward along the Alder road.

XXI

NOVEMBER rains wrapped Sweet Rocket. November winds rocked and bent the trees. The world was gray, or iron-gray, with rust-hued streakings. Indoors they built larger fires.

It was five days after Anna's departure. Unless the storm held him Curtin was going on the morrow. In January his profession would take him abroad, to the nearer East. He could not tell when he would be returning.

"But Sweet Rocket goes with me!"

"Just. As all the East and you flow here."

"What kind of a general world are we coming into, Linden? What kind of a political, social, economic world? I believe that, as to much of it, Robert and Frances are far seeing. In the large, those changes are upon us, and in the large they are for the better. They are built into the road we are going. I agree, I welcome! But I would see more completely if I could."

Linden, in the cane chair by the study window, seemed to pay attention to the storm. At last he spoke. "I cannot see in detail. I think there will be a great simplification. Power out of a

thousand tortuous channels mingling, running broad and deep! There are signs on every side. The old banks crumble. The great sea lifts other continents."

"I see everywhere how we are seeking."

"Yes. The seeker finds, the finder seeks on, seeks farther. The great ages are ever the seekers."

"You would say it is a great age?"

"Yes. A very great one. Who is not in some way aware of it? This friction of opinion on the top is but the wildness of the outermost leaves as the strong wind blows."

"And wherever I go I shall find the seeking and the greatness?"

"The world is One," said Linden.

The storm continued. Sweet Rocket had early supper. Zinia and Mimy, with raincoats and a huge umbrella, went by the swaying, chanting orchard to their own fireside, to Sarah and Julia and Jim and Just So. The Danes and Curtin and Drew, Linden and Marget, sat or moved about in the old Sweet Rocket parlor. They might watch the storm from the windows, or they might sit by the fire. The great wind blew through Sweet Rocket Valley. They heard the stream rushing, and the trees had a voice, as though they had taken foot out of ground and were now a herd. The rain was driven against the panes, and the wind hurled dead leaves with the rain. Wall and roof and glass shut out the

physical rain, but the psychical man cognized it far and near, rain since the world began. And the fire also, and the warm room, and they in company listening to the storm. The momentary outlines shifted. There fell a sense of having done this times and times and times, a sense of hut and cave, so often, so long, in so many lands, that there was a feel of eternity about it. Rain and the cave and the fire, and the inner man still busied with his destiny! There was something that awed in the perception that ran from one to another, that held them in a swift, shimmering band. "How old—how old! How long have we done this?"

The rhythm of the storm, the rhythm of the room, the rhythm of the fire, passed into a vast, still sense of ordered movement. "Of old, and now, and to-morrow—everywhere and all time—until we return above time and place, and division is healed."

They felt a lightness, a detachment. The spirit soared with the mind and made it look.

"There is the natural man and there is the spiritual man. That last finds himself in all selves, and all selves in him. There is the spiritual man, and there is the divine man who works with power. Both are words of inclusion. It is to leave the old small I for the spiritual I, and it is to transcend the last and enter that which is above. Then is left the shrunken pond for the ocean! Only we say it upside down. It

is the ocean that overflows and drinks up the pond."

"When God enters life there will still be said I?"

"Otherwise, still pond and ocean, still separation! Who shall lose his life here shall find it. But never sink to thinking that it is what in the past we have meant when we said I! When God enters how shall he not say I? But it is the ocean now that speaks! The pond is gone."

They sat still, and the fire played and leaped.

Through the night the rain beat and the wind blew, but at dawn it cleared. There was wreckage about the world, but life laughed and took her wreckage and built with it anew. Valley, hills, and mountains gleamed like precious stones. Navies of clouds rode for a while, then melted into the deep azure. The upper sea hung so calm and clear that down through it to the earth bottom ran light that seemed intenser than the light of every day.

Curtin said good-by, and went. Marget and Linden drove him to Alder.

The river ran swollen, the road lay deep in leaves, few leaves now on the trees. The trees stood still in vast ranks. They seemed to be holding something, to be turning it over in mind. There flashed across Curtin, "Who lifts, all lifts."

"Yes!" said Marget, beside him, as though he had spoken.

It was what he carried with him from this valley.

Linden and Marget drove home through the wood. "How still it is! Barring foot and wheel on the wet leaves you would say there was no stir. We are passing pine trees. How fragrant!"

"A bluebird is watching us from a maple. Now here is the great beech. It holds its leaves, though they are brown and curled upon themselves like cocoons. The ground underneath is clean and brown. A grapevine goes over and up with those young trees. There are yet bunches of grapes and they hang so still! There are brown loops for swings for all the forest children, whether they be Indians or dryads and fauns."

"I see them," said Linden, "all the graceful, tawny forest children!"

"Here is the oak glade with the grass yet green far down it, to where hangs the purple curtain. The outstanding great roots glisten, and the moss holds the water drops. You see a long way. Yonder is tree trunk and stone, light and shadow, that looks like a hermit's cell. It is an alley for the whole Middle Ages to come riding down—for a paladin to come riding down, the Red Cross Knight, or Guyon, or Galahad, or Parsifal—or it might be Robin Hood in Lincoln green!"

"I see."

"Here are green brier and red dogwood berries,

and witch-hazel with dull gold fingers. Can you hear the water?"

"Yes. Three silver threads of it, like a lute!"

"The day is a castle and a church, the day is a city and a star! Now we pass the great rock and the two hemlocks, like cathedral spires. Here are the little oaks, and there is a guess of crimson about them yet. The birch and the hickory and the tall oaks, and the tops are far and fine and melt into the sky—"

They came down to the river, and crossed. "The light washes the pillars, the cedars are little earth clouds. The arch of the sky has none, it springs clear blue. Music of home!"

"Yes. Music of home!"

After supper, with Robert and Frances and Drew they watched the fire. "Anna sends the city to us, and Curtin sends the rush of the train and the flying scenery. As we send this place and this mood and this thought to the city and the train!"

The violin bow drew across the strings. Frances played, and love and release filled the ancient room. The world entered into harmony.

The next day rose gray pearl. Linden and Drew went with the woodcutters. Marget sat at her typewriter in the study. Robert and Frances took a long walk. Three days, and they, too, must go cityward. Now they walked by the Alder road, and at the great pine took the Rock Mountain trail.

The pearly light filled the forest like a water. All sound lay subdued. When a stone rolled underfoot it was not loudly; when a branch broke it was with a slow, deliberate, musing voice. When they saw a wild thing, the wild thing had no motion of flight, but pottered stilly on upon its business of the time. "We are far away! We have crossed to another land. It is as though we died, and this is the quiet ground where we take our reckoning before we find another busy world. Oh, a busy world in each of us, and a quiet land!"

They rested upon a bowlder half sunken in brown leaves. "There is a touch of eternity about this day. . . . Yet in five days how busy a world for you and me!"

"Yet I love that as I love this. How happy that we are so rich!"

They sat still on the gray bowlder in the gray wood in the pearl-gray air. Minutes passed. A bird flew across the path, a gray squirrel ran up an oak. "Something is coming down the trail."

The something proved to be a man on horseback. The intervening boughs, branches, twigs, made him to be seen like a horseman behind a great window filled with small, leaded panes. He came close, and, seeing them, drew rein. "Good day!"

"Good day!"

"From Sweet Rocket?"

"Yes, from Sweet Rocket."

"Do I speak to Mr. Linden? My name is Smith—Malcolm Smith from the Reserve on Rock Mountain."

Robert gave their names. Mr. Smith said: "Have you ever seen a stiller day? It is one of the still days that set you on new action. I thought I would ride over. I want to see Drew, and there is something else—"

After a minute or two he addressed himself again to the path. "I'll go on, as I have only this afternoon and to-night. I must get back to camp to-morrow." He made no doubt, it might be noticed, of the hospitality of Sweet Rocket. "I shall see you again?"

"Yes. We shall turn presently."

They watched him along the trail until, as the figure had entered, so it vanished from the leaded window. They sat awhile longer in the gray-pearl world, and then they rose and followed the horseman down to Sweet Rocket.

XXII

MALCOLM SMITH and Drew had their talk, walking by the river in the still, November dusk. Drew said: "I was glad to be on Rock Mountain, and after a few months, if you will have me, I am going there again. But I am glad that I came here. I am growing to see that it is not here nor there, camp on mountain or Sweet Rocket, that a man goes to find himself. But yet there are helpers. . . . There's a principle of induction, don't you think, sir? Those who find start a wave of finding. The wave caught them, too. There isn't any first or last."

Turning, they saw fire gleaming through the window. "He says that we (and when he says that he means the whole of us. When he says 'I' it is the other word for 'we.' It is the Whole of the many) are growing fast to-day. Sometimes he says Evolving Life, sometimes the Principle of Integration, or the Great Synthesis. He may say Humanity Awake, or Going Home, or Realizing Deity, or Liberation in God, or Becoming Real, or Fulfilling Want, or Recollection, or Union, or the Eternal, Including *SELF*,

or Love at Last. He seems to think that almost any phrase will answer if you know the thing."

Zinia's bell rang from the porch behind them. They went in to the pleasant supper table, set with wholesome, delicate bread, and fragrant coffee, cottage cheese, and baked apples and cream. The table talk was merry this evening, after the dreamy day. Supper over, all walked out to see the night, and found it clearing, with river banks of clouds and stars between like lit craft sailing, sailing. The air breathed exquisitely mild, warm to-night as early October. "Let us sit by the river and watch awhile." They took capes and coats and went down to where, before the cedars, was placed a long bench. Sitting here, though no entire constellation was visible, yet they pieced out the figures.

They sat in silence, watching the ships of the universe. At last said the visitor: "I have been thinking a good deal about you down here by this river, and about Drew, and of two or three things Mr. Curtin said when he was at camp. So I came down. I have been thinking a good deal. Look! there is Pleiades, a magic island in a sea. I have had my inklings of the way currents arise in this world. Let's grant that it is a universe of thought and will and feeling, and that, from ignoring as much as we could that fact, and then from wondering about it, and then from in some wise earning it, we begin to be it—"

"Just," said Linden. "Well?"

The other continued, "Once, when I was recovering from an illness, I found or was found by —and I don't suppose the expressions matter—"

"No. They are distinctions without a difference."

"Once, then, I walked into a state of consciousness that transcended the level that I had thought was the true level. I was there for it might be five seconds of our time. But though again in mass we parted, there remained an influence—like one of those rivers up there. The world has never since been just the old world. But the main experience did not repeat itself, though there have been times when I have met the shadows of it. Until the other night. But I will come to that presently. Though it was not repeated I have known ever since that there is a consciousness as much above our usual one as the latter is above the ape's. A consciousness that it is profoundly desirable to reach. Before that moment I was like almost any European of say 1491. During it—for that one minute—I was in America. After it, though I returned to Europe, I could say, there *is* America!"

"Yes. Just."

"But I had fallen out of America and I could never get quite back, though I often tried. And then the other night—"

He broke off, and seemed to ponder the sky.

"I rode over from Rock Mountain because the other night I had, not that first experience again, but one that was again in America—New America. From what I have heard I felt certain that this place knows these experiences. I wanted to compare, and be confirmed. So I rode over." He was speaking to Linden. "I had meant to ask to talk with you alone, but I see that there is nothing here that jars or makes it difficult. It's a good place, this bench, with the river sounding, and the clouds and the stars."

"There is just ourself here."

"I was coming down from the top of Rock. I had had a still twenty minutes there, watching the sunset. I had thought of nothing in particular, only gathered rest. I was halfway down when this torrent rose and overtook me. I stood still. I remember a pine tree, and beyond that a great wash of sky. But I—I was in the torrent that now seemed Ocean, and now seemed Air, and now was Fire. The combination called Malcolm Smith was gone into that, like rain into sea or a candle flame into sun. And yet—and that was the miracle of it—there was an I, only it was oceanic, only it was the sun! It held in a sheaf, it sucked out pith and marrow of all the small 'me's' in creation, and soared and rang, an All-Person. But what are words? If I could give you that sense—"

"Perhaps you do. As long ago we developed gesture in order faintly to understand and be

at one, and then developed speech, so now the Will within is propelling and the Will within is receiving these mightier waves. I feel what you would give. Go on."

"If I could find the words! I passed into a subtle consciousness that went everywhere, and all our old time became space to it. There was motion, as of all the winds of the world brought into one current—only nor air nor fire is swift enough, vast enough! And yet you would say 'Quietude.' . . . All the movements of our world penetrated, understood, furthered—all the honey fields, all the bees, all the hives—and Valhalla and Olympus and Paradise, where the honey is eaten! And it is all a figure, but what will you have! I can but stammer. I have seen home."

He rose, and walked up and down beneath the cedars. "I talk about it so calmly, and yet all that I ever believed or hoped, all that I ever thought or felt or did, is babyhood to that! I am patient, and that astonishes me; I who am back at Malcolm Smith!"

"You are not wholly back. The rising pendulum swings, but now a great part of you is above the old, lower range. And at the last not anticipation, but reality, not light of home, but home!"

The river sounded, the stars shone in the upper rivers with the cloud banks. The clouds made rivers, but, the clouds dissolved, there were no

more rivers, but Ocean, but Space, but the Eternal Fire!

"It is all I have to tell," said Smith. "It sank with long reverberations, and there was the pine tree, and the camp below, and Malcolm Smith."

They sat in silence. At last, said Linden: "America is a term of vastness. They who adventured there and arrived found all manner of experience, but all in America. They sailed in many crafts—and yet in the end all were as one ship, all being for America. They landed north or south, in varying climes; they stayed by the sea or went toward the mountains, but all in America. They met with great variety in adventure, the land being so vast and so rich in might, but all was American adventure. . . . So it is, I hold, with the New America, the New World now lighting the horizon. It resounds and flames thus to this one, and thus to the other one. But it resounds and flames. The Great Symphony takes in all the music. Feel it as you can, know it as you can! In proportion as you draw the breath of the All, comparisons become odious. You have access as I have access. Enter by the door of your inner nature!"

"A new man is born?"

"Yes. Everywhere. Including and transcending men. Men fading into Man, men left behind. Man moving toward his full Consciousness. What in prophecy we have called Christ."

They watched the clouds and the stars, and they saw, each of them, a new Country that was fair and strong and keen and glowing. . . .

At last they rose and went back to the house, and by the fire listened to the violin.

XXIII

DAY rose in sapphire, tranquil, pure, still and sunny, white smoke going straight up from morning fires. Malcolm Smith, mounting his horse, turned again to his mountain. Sweet Rocket bade him good-by, but Linden and Marget said, "All who come together in this consciousness part no more!"

"I believe that."

He rode away, and in the afternoon was back with his work. But the inner eye might view, between mountain and Sweet Rocket, a shimmering, ethereal highway, a nerve, as it were, thrown from space to space, joining and making one.

Robert and Frances and Marget, on this last day of the Danes' visit, walked to the hill with the solitary tree atop. The sapphire day continued, quiet and sunny, the air being of an extreme fineness charged with light. Far and near the mountains made a cup of amethyst. Fields and hillsides at hand were a lighted umber. They saw long rows of stacked corn, and in the meadows hayricks. Beyond the orchard they made out the steep roof of the

great barn. There were corn and wheat for the mill, there were stored apples. In the wood below them they heard the woodman's ax.

"I can see," said Robert Dane, "I can see that Humanity is mastering its own organism. I see that it is lifting toward Unitary Consciousness. Here, now, in this present year as in past years, each year now with greater momentum. Reaction and recoil, of course—but back again, and farther! Everywhere shows the swift inter-approach. All over, all through, America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and the islands of the sea. The revolutions of our day are woven of it. We are leaving separation and partialness, fortress and dungeon."

"Yes. All our 'movements' rush into the one. All our vortices approach with a fearful joy the Great Vortex. The Correlation will be established, the Summation made. We go to join and strengthen the Ancient Heavens. The Ancient of Days draws and redeems and fuses and Ones another layer of his being. Faster and faster our age begins to see what is happening. The language men use to describe it does not so much matter. The poet names it Life, Beauty, and Joy; the scientific man says Knowledge and Use; the philosopher says Energy and Substance in conscious union; the Hindu says the *SELF;* our peoples say God. . . . All one."

They came to the hilltop and stood to look about them. "There is such joy!" went on

Marget. "Pain and pleasure outgrown, now blooms the joy! 'Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.' The being found and the finding. One after another lays hand upon that world, clings, braces himself, draws himself up and over and finds the manna lying around him. Joy, wisdom and power! and the taste of them but begun. Possession still to be possessed—forever and forever!"

They sat beneath the tree and all around sprang the valley and the mountains and Virginia and the world. "Alive—deathlessly alive! The valley and the mountains, Virginia and the world!"

Frances spoke. "I know a woman who speaks in the terms of the East. Is it the Principle of Sensibility—the Buddhic plane?"

"Yes. Atma is yet to arrive. What we see is the light before his face. When he fully comes that is the Day of the Lord. What all work has been toward, all toil, all hoping. As Atma rises in us—as Christ rises in us—comes newer and richer life, fuller and fuller, inner powers and principalities, thrones and dominions, and their objective garments. But when WE ARE THE LORD —I know not! There is Light there that is as darkness to us yet."

The exquisite valley heightened its values throughout, became richer. The mountains around hung in the eye like the Delectable Mountains.

"If one grows, all things and all places grow with that one?"

"Inevitably so! The wealth is for all."

"The new consciousness that we feel is a pale film to what will be?"

"Yes. A borderland, the islands fringing the New World. But such as it is it wipes out the old, blind, scattered, little consciousnesses. To what shall be felt and shall be known it is the one leaf of green, it is the olive leaf that the dove brings. But before us are enormous growth, strange and fair adventure, work, joy, love—"

Through the air they felt the ether, through the sunlight they felt the Great Sun. Light and warmth came to them from the Sun behind the sun. It touched, it passed, but each time it came they strengthened.

That night by the fire they sat in silence that was full and rich and understanding. "To-morrow night, here at Sweet Rocket, just Richard and Marget and Drew—and all the rest of us!"

The next day dawned, and still it was Indian summer. Robert and Frances went from place to place, as had gone Curtin and Anna Darcy, saying farewell. "We wish and hope to bring our bodies here again next year. But if that is not done, still, still, still we shall have Sweet Rocket!"

"You have access now to all places and times

and peoples. You are through the gate, you two! All your good dreams now will come true. If not in this way then in that. Every dream that does no injury to the Whole."

Richard and Marget, Daniel and the phaeton, took them to Alder. The still forest was clothed to-day in purple. For much of the way silence held within the phaeton as without. But it was the silence that Anna Darcy had early noted. It was rhythmic, it was thronged, it was fused and made into the richest solitude.

"But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound or foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home."

Now and then they spoke. Once Robert said, abruptly, "And all the effort of the world is to stand and grow in grace?"

"Just. All the effort. Everywhere! Whether it be stone or plant or animal or man or overman. And where the Emerging Character is so mighty none is to despise his brother's path or rate of speed. Once it was his own. Everything has been and is our own. Work! but who hates or despises halts and weakens the effort."

"But work!"

"Yes, steadily. In all realms. 'What thy hand findeth to do, do with thy might.' What thy judgment findeth to do. The other name of Lubber Land was Good Enough."

They came to Alder with its churches and sere gardens lying in violet light. Here was the little station—in a few moments they heard the train.

"Good-by!"

"Good-by!"

Frances and Robert looked through the car window. The platform had men, women, and children upon it. Two or three arriving travelers found friends to meet them; there were the workers about the station and the loafers, with country folk and village folk brought by some business, and in the throng Richard Linden and Marget Land. Just the usual village station. Then all of it sprang into light, into music, into significance, into importance. The train moved. There was a cry of "Good-by! Come again!" All seemed to enter into it, to cry it out.

The houses went by, the village street, the hills, the river, and all, all, and this train upon which they found themselves had color and music and significance and importance.

"The I that says of every living thing, 'It is I,' says it and means it and understands it and proceeds to live from it, says it of the total objective, and so takes the objective up into the Subject—that I is over the verge of the old into the New—"

The hills went by, the river gleamed.

Marget and Richard traveled homeward

through the purple forest. To-day they hardly used the outer voice. The blind man sat with a smile upon his lips as though he saw, with such a face as could only have come from much seeing. The woman, too, sat still, the body relaxed, the spirit gleaming in the soul. Daniel drew them through the forest; nor did Daniel, either, lack some sense of growth, dim belief in a higher world, dim will to reach it. Below Daniel the forest felt that, and below the forest the rock. The utter stream of pilgrims—

THE END

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